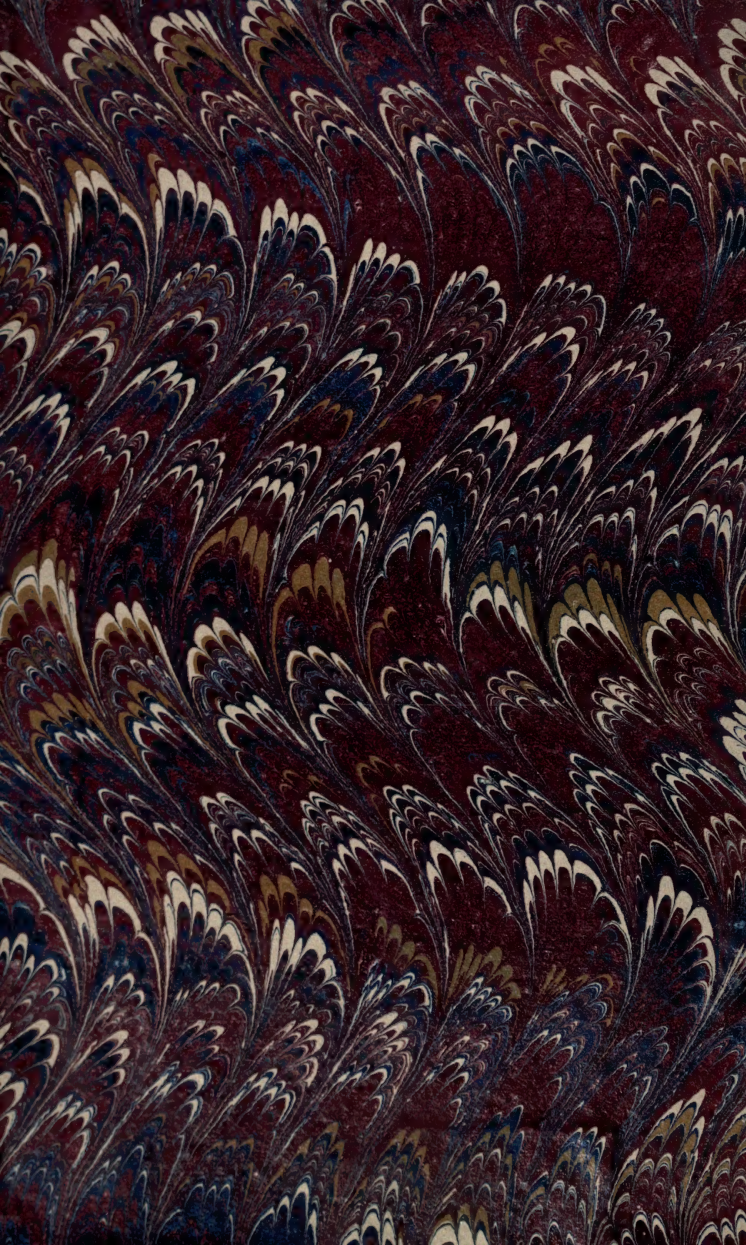


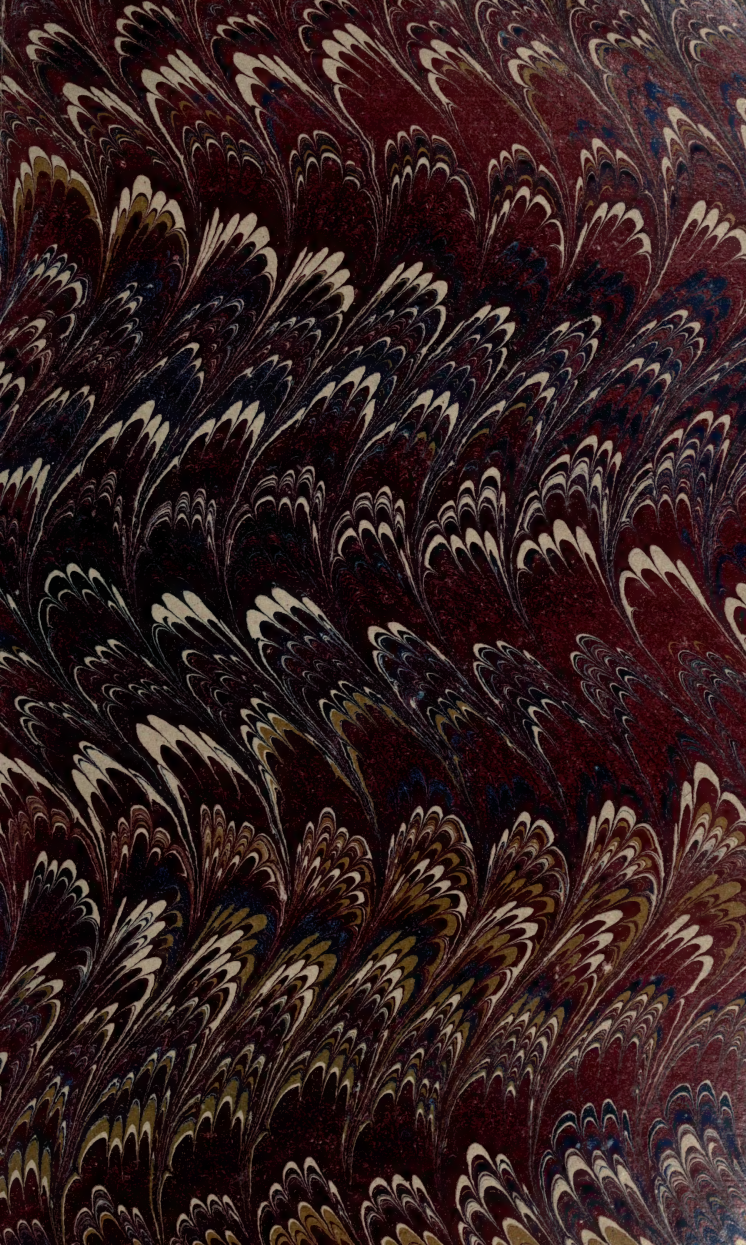
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FREDERICK VON SCHLEGEL.

THE
PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY,

IN A
COURSE OF LECTURES,

DELIVERED AT VIENNA

BY FREDERICK VON SCHLEGEL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

JAMES BURTON ROBERTSON, ESQ.



FOURTH EDITION, REVISED.

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## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

TEN years have elapsed since this translation first issued from the press. A long abode in Germany, and a more extensive acquaintance with German literature, have convinced me, that the estimate I had formed of the genius of the eminent personage who forms the subject of the following memoir, as well as of the moral and intellectual influence he exerted over his age, was not exaggerated. In many departments of letters and philosophy, I perceived the deep traces which this remarkable spirit had left in its passage. From enlightened Germans, Protestant as well as Catholic, in conversation as well as in print, I have heard him styled, "one of the profoundest thinkers our country ever produced."

At Bonn, I had the honour of becoming acquainted with his celebrated brother, A. W. von Schlegel, whose recent loss the literary world still deplores, and who had preserved in his advanced age so much of the vigour of his great intellectual powers. There also I formed a friendship with the late excellent Dr. Windischmann,\* who had been F. Schlegel's most intimate friend, and whose extensive learning and deep philosophic views, were only equalled by his fervent piety. Later, I learned to know

\* Dr. Windischmann was Catholic Professor of Philosophy at the university of Bonn. His most celebrated work is the "History of Religion and Philosophy in China and India." He was nominated to the chair of philosophy at Bonn, in the year 1818, when the university was founded; and no nomination reflected more credit on the government of the late King of Prussia, or afforded more satisfaction to his Rhenish subjects. By the statutes of the mixed universities of Bonn and Breslau, the Catholic and Protestant churches, are each entitled to their respective faculties of theology, and to their several chairs of philosophy and history. The other professorships may be occupied indifferently by Catholics and Protestants. By an arbitrary measure of the late King of Prussia, the Catholic chair of history at Bonn was allowed to remain vacant for the space of fifteen years; but his enlightened successor, on his accession to the throne, repaired this injustice.

that distinguished artist, Veith, who has married a relative of F. Schlegel's; as also the learned Dr. William von Schütz, who had been intimately acquainted with him from his youth. From these eminent men I learned interesting particulars respecting the subject of the preceding memoir.

I said once to Dr. Windischmann, "I thought there was in Frederick Schlegel stuff enough to produce two or three great geniuses." "You are right," he replied. His last works, "The Philosophy of Life," "The Philosophy of History," and "The Philosophy of Language," were only the prelude, or the porch, to a vaster system of philosophy. Of this I have discovered the traces in his papers, which have been confided to my care. Years ago, when I wrote to him, that the world was looking for some other great work from his hands, he replied: "I am working under ground." "The truth of this remark," continued Dr. Windischmann, "I now perceive."

I knew only one eminent man, who though a great admirer of the æsthetic and historical works of F. Schlegel, yet underrated his metaphysical writings. This was a Catholic theologian, distinguished for his great dialectic skill, and whose favourite philosopher was our countryman, Duns Scotus, the *Doctor subtilis* of the Middle Age. Now the talent of dialectic ratiocination was the least conspicuous of F. Schlegel's intellectual qualities. This was, perhaps, the only gift, which Nature had dealt out with a more niggard hand to her much-favoured child. For this great writer, whose works are a vast repertory of thoughts, hints, perceptions, and views, on æsthetics, history, theology, and metaphysics—whose memory was stored with the riches of all climes, whose imagination was so vigorous, whose understanding was profound even to mystical intuition—this great writer seemed not to possess the power of constructing a philosophical system, fastened and bound in by a long chain of reasoning. Hence he has not founded a metaphysical school. And in the philosophic contest, which for

the last twenty-five years has been going on in Germany—a contest which, on the part of the Pantheistic Hegel and his followers, as well as of their Christian adversaries, has been conducted in rigid dialectic forms—his influence has, consequently, been less perceptible. But in opposition to the opinion adverted to above, we may cite the authority of the most philosophic spirits of Germany—Staudenmaier (another eminent Catholic divine), Molitor, Windischmann, Papst, and others, who have rendered full justice to the richness, variety, and depth of F. Schlegel's metaphysical views. Had his genius been more dialectic, it would, probably, have been less flexible, less plastic, and less universal; for, in man's limited capacity, there are some talents which seem mutually incompatible. But if less distinguished for logical precision, he has, like his brother, never been surpassed in the art of rhetorical method or arrangement.

In the foregoing memoir his poetry was not sufficiently appreciated. His religious poems, above all, are particularly beautiful, and are marked by that earnest, thoughtful tone, which runs through all his compositions.

In respect to his personal life, I have one mistake to correct. It was not in the year 1805, but in 1808, that F. Schlegel was received into the bosom of the Catholic Church. Prior to taking this important step, he devoted, says Professor Windischmann,\* days and nights to the study of the Fathers. In his early days, when he professed philosophy at the University of Jena, and enjoyed the society of a circle of most distinguished men, composed of his brother, Novalis, Tieck, Ritter, Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and occasionally Göthe; he was frequently questioned as to his religious opinions, but he invariably replied, "my answer is not yet ready." On one occasion he declared in a letter to a friend; "I regard the Catholic Church as the greatest historical authority on the earth." Vague, undefined, and unsettled as were his

\* See the interesting introduction he prefixed to F. Schlegel's posthumous works, published in 1837. 2 vols. Bonn. 1837.



religious principles in early life, and led away as he then was by the pleasures of the world, still his strong love for Plato the most orthodox of heathens,—his fervid passion for Art in all her forms—his spirit of historical research, which acted as a counterpoise to his metaphysical speculations ; lastly, his eminent sobriety of judgment, served to guard him not only against the vulgar rationalism, but against those more seductive errors of a subtle Pantheism, which then fascinated many of the eminent men with whom he associated. Though he then delighted in the writings of that extraordinary mystic, Jacob Behmen, he knew, as his early philosophical lectures show, how to distinguish what was sound and excellent in them from what was erroneous and dangerous.

One of the most amiable traits in this great man's character, and which he shared with his illustrious friend, Count Stolberg, was an unfailing sweetness of charity. A harsh, intemperate, acrimonious zeal was not only abhorrent from his nature, but was regarded by him as most detrimental to the best interests of religion.

Great as was the influence of his writings over the godless generation, in which his destiny was cast, that influence is likely to increase in the better times that have succeeded ; and the homage which he wrung from many a reluctant contemporary, will be cheerfully and spontaneously accorded to him by an unanimous posterity

*October, 30th, 1845.*

THE  
AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE most important subject, and the first problem of philosophy, is the restoration in man of the lost image of God; so far as this relates to science.

Should this restoration in the internal consciousness be fully understood, and really brought about, the object of pure philosophy is attained.

To point out historically in reference to the whole human race, and in the outward conduct and experience of life, the progress of this restoration in the various periods of the world, constitutes the object of the "Philosophy of History."

In this way, we shall clearly see how, in the first ages of the world, the original word of Divine revelation formed the firm central point of faith for the future reunion of the dispersed race of man; how later, amid the various power, intellectual as well as political, which, in the middle period of the world, all-ruling nations exerted on their times according to the measure allotted to them, it was alone the power of eternal love in the Christian religion which truly emancipated and redeemed mankind: and how, lastly, the pure light of this Divine truth, universally diffused through the world, and through all science—the term of all Christian hope, and Divine promise, whose fulfilment is reserved for the last period of consummation—crowns in conclusion the progress of this restoration.

World, and the new awakening of science. The three following Lectures are devoted to the Religious Wars, the period of Illuminism, and the time of the French Revolution.

The eighteenth and concluding Lecture turns on the prevailing spirit of the age, and on the universal regeneration of society.

We have yet to make the following observations with respect to this undertaking, in which we have attempted to lay the foundations of a new general Philosophy.

The first awakening and excitement of human consciousness to the true perception and knowledge of truth has been already unfolded in my work on the "Philosophy of Life."

To point out now the progressive restoration in humanity of the effaced image of God, according to the gradation of grace in the various periods of the world, from the revelation of the beginning, down to the middle revelation of redemption and love, and from the latter to the last consummation, is the object of this "Philosophy of History."

A third work, treating of the science of thought in the department of faith and nature, will, with more immediate reference to the Philosophy of Language, comprehend the complete restoration of consciousness, according to the triple divine principle.

It is my wish that this work should, as soon as circumstances will permit, speedily follow the two works "The Philosophy of Life," and "The Philosophy of History," now presented to the Public.

*Vienna, Sept. 6th, 1828.*





MEMOIR  
OF  
THE LITERARY LIFE  
OF  
FREDERICK VON SCHLEGEL.

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IN the following sketch of the literary life of the late Frederick Von Schlegel, it is the intention of the writer to take a rapid review of that author's principal productions, noticing the circumstances out of which they grew, and the influence they exerted on his age; giving, at the same, time a fuller analysis of his political and metaphysical systems:—an analysis which is useful, nay almost necessary to the elucidation of very many passages in the work, to which this memoir is prefixed. Of the inadequacy of his powers to the due execution of such a task, none can be more fully sensible than the writer himself; but he trusts that he will experience from the kindness of the reader, an indulgence proportionate to the difficulty of the undertaking.

In offering to the British public a translation of one of the last works of one among the most illustrious of German writers, the translator is aware, that after the excellent translation which appeared in 1818 of this author's "History of Literature," and also after the ad-

mirable translation of his brother's "Lectures on Dramatic Literature," by Mr. Black, his own performance must appear in a very disadvantageous point of view. But this is a circumstance which only gives it additional claims to indulgent consideration.

The family of the Schlegels seem to have been peculiarly favoured by the Muses. Elias Schlegel, a member of this family, was a distinguished dramatic writer in his own time : and some of his plays are, I believe, acted in Germany at the present day. Adolphus Schlegel, the father of the subject of the present biography, was a minister of the Lutheran church, distinguished for his literary talents, and particularly for eloquence in the pulpit. His eldest son, Charles Augustus Schlegel, entered with the Hanoverian regiment to which he belonged into the service of our East India Company, and had begun to prosecute with success his studies in Sanscrit literature—a field of knowledge in which his brothers have since obtained so much distinction—when his youthful career was unhappily terminated by the hand of death. Augustus William Schlegel, the second son, who was destined to carry to so high a pitch the literary glory of his family, was born at Hanover, in 1769—a year so propitious to the birth of genius. Frederick Schlegel was born at Hanover, in 1772. Though destined for commerce, he received a highly classical education ; and in his sixteenth year prevailed on his father to allow him to devote himself to the *Belles Lettres*. After completing his academical course at Göttingen and Leipzig, he rejoined his brother, and became associated with him in his literary labours. He has himself given us the interesting picture of his own mind at this early period. "In my first youth," says he, "from the age of seventeen and upwards, the writings of Plato, the Greek tragedians, and Winkelmann's enthusiastic works, formed the intellectual world in which I lived, and where I often strove in a youthful manner, to represent to my soul the ideas and images of ancient gods and heroes. In the year 1789, I was en-

abled, for the first time, to gratify my inclination in that capital so highly refined by art—Dresden ; and I was as much surprised as delighted to see really before me those antique figures of gods I had so long desired to behold. Among these I often tarried for hours, especially in the incomparable collection of Mengs's casts, which were then to be found, disposed in a state of little order in the Brühl garden, where I often let myself be shut up, in order to remain without interruption. It was not the consummate beauty of form alone, which satisfied and even exceeded the expectation I had secretly formed ; but it was still more the life—the animation in those Olympic marbles, which excited my astonishment ; for the latter qualities I had been less able to picture to myself in my solitary musings. These first indelible impressions were in succeeding years, the firm, enduring ground-work for my study of classical antiquity.\* Here he found the sacred fire at which his genius lit the torch, destined to blaze through his life with inextinguishable brightness.

He commenced his literary career in 1794, with a short essay on the different schools of Greek poetry. It is curious to watch in this little piece the buddings of his mind. Here we see, as it were, the germ of the first part of the great work on ancient and modern literature, which he published nearly twenty years afterwards. We are astonished to find in a youth of twenty-two an erudition so extensive—an acquaintance not only with the more celebrated poets and philosophers of ancient Greece, but also with the obscure, recondite Alexandrian poets, known to comparatively few scholars even of a maturer age. We admire, too, the clearness of analytic arrangement—the admirable method of classification, in which the author and his brother have ever so far outshone the generality of German writers. The essay displays, also, a delicacy of observation and an originality of views, which announce the great critic. It is, in short, the labour of an infant Hercules.

\* *Sämmtliche Werke, Vorrede, p. 8, vol. 6.*



As this essay gives promise of a mighty critic, so two treatises, which the author wrote in the following years, 1795 and 1796—one entitled “Diotima,” and which treats of the condition of the female sex in ancient Greece—the other, a parallel between Cæsar and Alexander, not published, however, till twenty-six years afterwards—both show the dawnings of his great historical genius. Rarely have the promises of youth been so amply fulfilled—rarely has the green foliage of spring been followed by fruits so rich and abundant. It is interesting to observe the fine, organic development of Schlegel’s mental powers—to trace in these early productions, the germs of those great historical works which it was reserved for his manhood and age to achieve. In the latter and most remarkable of these essays, he examines the respective merits of Cæsar and Alexander, considered as men, as generals, and as statesmen. To the Macedonian he assigns greater tenderness of feeling, a more generous and lofty disinterestedness of character—and a finer power of perception for the beauties of art. To the Roman he ascribes greater coolness and sobriety of judgment, an extraordinary degree of self-control, a mind tenacious of its purpose, but careless as to the means by which it was accomplished, an exquisite sense of fitness and propriety in the smallest as in the greatest things, yet little susceptibility for the beautiful in art. With respect to military genius, he shows that Cæsar united to the fire and rapidity of the Macedonian, greater constancy and perseverance; yet that the temerity of Alexander was not always the effect of impetuous passion, but sometimes the result at once of situation and deliberate reflection. As regards the political capacities of these two great conquerors, he shows that Cæsar possessed an over-mastering ascendancy over the minds of men—the talent of guiding their wills, and making them subservient to his own views and interests—in short, a consummate skill in the tactics of a party-leader. Yet he thinks him destitute of the wisdom of a law-giver, or what he emphatically calls, the *organic*

*genius of state*—the power to found, or renovate a constitution. To Alexander, on the contrary, he attributes the plastic genius of legislation—the will and the ability to diffuse among nations the blessings of civilisation—to plant cities, and establish free, flourishing, and permanent communities.

In the year 1797, Schlegel published his first important work, entitled “the Greeks and the Romans.” This work was, two or three years afterwards, followed by another, entitled “History of Greek Poetry.” These two writings in their original form are no longer to be met with—for in the new edition of the author’s works, they not only have undergone various alterations and additions, but have been, as it were, melted into one work. Winkelmann’s history of art was the model which Schlegel proposed to himself in this history of Greek poetry; and we must allow that the noble school which that illustrious man, as well as Lessing, Herder, and Goethe, had founded in Germany, never received a richer acquisition than in the work here spoken of. Prior to the illustrious writers I have named, Germany had produced a multitude of scholars distinguished for profound learning and critical acuteness; but their labours may be considered as only ancillary and preliminary to the works of men who, with an erudition and a perspicacity never surpassed, united a poetical sense and a philosophic discernment that could catch the spirit of antiquity, reanimate her forms, and place them in all their living freshness before our eyes.

In the first chapter of the “History of Greek Poetry,” Schlegel speaks of the religious rites and mysteries of the primitive Greeks, and of the Orphic poetry to which they gave rise. Contrary to the opinion of many scholars who, though they admit the present form of the Orphic hymns to be the work of a later period, yet refer their substance to a very remote antiquity, Schlegel assigns their origin to the age of Hesiod. “Enthusiasm,” he says, “is the characteristic of the Orphic poetry—repose that of the Homeric poems.” His observations, however, on the early

religion of the Greeks, form, in my humble opinion, the least satisfactory portion of this work. He next gives an interesting account of the state of society in Greece in the age of Homer, as well as in the one preceeding, and shows by a long process of inductive evidence, how the Homeric poetry was the crown and perfection of a long series of Bardic poems.

He then examines, at great length, the opinions of the ancients from the earliest Greek to the latest Roman critics, on the plan, the diction, and poetical merits of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; interweaving in this review of ancient criticism his own remarks, which serve either to correct the errors, supply the deficiencies, or illustrate the wisdom of those ancient judges of art. After this survey of ancient criticism, he proceeds to point out some of the characteristic features of the Homeric poems. He inquires what is understood by natural poetry, or the poetry of nature; shows that it is perfectly compatible with art—that there is a wide difference between the natural and the rude—that Homer is distinguished as much for delicacy of perception, accuracy of delineation, and sagacity of judgment, as for fertility of fancy and energy of passion. The author next passes in review the Hesiodic epos, the middle epos, or the works of the Cyclic poets, and lastly, the productions of the Ionic, *Æolic*, and Doric schools of lyric poetry. The fragments on the lyric poetry of Greece are particularly beautiful, and comprise not only excellent criticisms, on the genius of the different lyrists themselves, but also most interesting observations on the character, manners, and social institutions, of the races that composed the Hellenic confederacy.

It was Schlegel's intention to have given a complete history of Greek poetry; but the execution of this task was abandoned, not from any want of perseverance, as some have imagined, but from some peculiar circumstances in the world of letters at that period. The literary scepticism of Wolf, supported with so much learning and ability, was then convulsing the German mind; and while the



purity of the Homeric text, and the unity and integrity of the Homeric poems themselves were so ably contested, Schlegel deemed it a hazardous task to attempt to draw public attention to any æsthetic inquiries on the elder Greek poetry. Hence the second part of this work, which treats of the lyric poets, remained unfinished. The general qualities, which must strike all in this history of Greek poetry are, a masterly acquaintance with classical literature—a wariness and circumspection of judgment, rare in any writer, especially in one so young—a critical perspicacity, that draws its conclusions from the widest range of observation—and a poetic flexibility of fancy, that can transport itself into the remotest periods of antiquity. In a word, the author analyses as a critic, feels as a poet, and observes like a philosopher.

But a new career now expanded before the ardent mind of Schlegel. The enterprising spirit of British scholars had but twenty years before opened a new intellectual world to European inquiry;—a world many of whose spiritual productions, disguised in one shape or another, the Western nations had for a long course of ages admired and enjoyed, ignorant as they were of the precise region from which they were brought. For the knowledge of the Sanscrit tongue and literature—an event in literary importance inferior only to the revival of Greek learning, and in a religious and philosophic point of view, pregnant, perhaps, with greater results;—mankind have been indebted to the influence of British commerce; and it is not one of the least services which that commerce has rendered to the cause of civilisation. In the promotion of Sanscrit learning, the merchant princes of Britain emulated the noble zeal displayed four centuries before by the merchant princes of Florence, in the encouragement and diffusion of Hellenic literature. By dint of promises and entreaties, they extorted from the Brahmin the mystic key, which has opened to us so many wonders of the primitive world. And as a great Christian philosopher

of our age\* has observed, it is fortunate that India was not then under the dominion of the French; for during the irreligious fever which inflamed and maddened that great people, their insidious guides—those detestable sophists of the eighteenth century—would most assuredly have leagued with the Brahmins to suppress the truth, to mutilate the ancient monuments of Sanscrit lore, and thus would have for ever poisoned the sources of Indian learning. A British society was established at Calcutta—whose object it was to investigate the languages, historical antiquities, sciences, and religious and philosophical systems of Asia, and more especially of Hindostan. Sir William Jones—a name that will be revered as long as genius, learning, and Christian philosophy command the respect of mankind—was the soul of this enterprise. He brought to the investigation of Indian literature and history, a mind stored with the treasures of classical and Oriental scholarship—a spirit of indefatigable activity—and a clear, methodical, and capacious intellect. No man, too, so fully understood the religious bearings of these inquiries, and had so well seized the whole subject of Asiatic antiquities in its connexion with the Bible. But at the period at which we have arrived, this great spirit had already taken its departure; nor in its flight had it dropped its mantle of inspiration on any of the former associates of its labours. For among the academicians of Calcutta, though there were men of undoubted talent and learning, there were none who inherited the philosophic mind of Jones. At this period, too, the fanciful temerity of a Wilford was bringing discredit on the Indian researches—a temerity which would necessarily provoke a re-action, and lead, as in some recent instances, to a prosaic narrow-mindedness, that would seek to bring down the whole system of Indian civilisation to the dull level of its own vulgar conceptions.

Schlegel saw that the moment was critical. He saw

\* Count Maistre.—See his “*Soirées de St. Petersburg.*”

that the edifice of Oriental learning, raised at the cost of so much labour by Sir William Jones, was in danger of falling to pieces—that all the mighty results which Christian philosophy had anticipated from these inquiries, would be, if not frustrated, at least indefinitely postponed—that a wild, uncritical, extravagant fancifulness on the one hand, or a dull and dogged Rationalism on the other—(equally adverse as both are to the cause of historic truth)—would soon bring these researches into inextricable confusion; in short, that the time had arrived when they should be fairly brought before the more enlarged philosophy of Germany. Filled with this idea, and animated by that pure zeal for science, which is its own best reward, Schlegel resolved to betake him to the study of the Sanscrit tongue. But for the considerations I have ventured to suggest, such a resolution on the part of such a man would be surely calculated to excite regret: we should be inclined to lament that a mind so original, already saturated with so much elegant literature and solid learning, should be thus doomed in the bloom of its existence, to consume years in the toilsome acquisition of the most difficult of all languages.

In prosecution of his undertaking, Schlegel repaired in the year 1802, to Paris, which had been long celebrated for her professors in the Eastern tongues, and where the national library presented to the Oriental scholar, inexhaustible stores of wealth. Here, with the able assistance of those distinguished Orientalists, M.M. de Langlès and Chézy, Schlegel made considerable progress in the study of Persian and Sanscrit literature. But while engaged in these laborious pursuits, he contrives to find time to plunge into the then almost unexplored mines of Provençal poesy—to undertake profound researches into the history of the middle age, and to deliver lectures on metaphysics in the French language. If these lectures did not meet with all the success which might have been hoped for, this cannot surprise us, when we consider that the gross materialism



which had long weighed on the Parisian mind, and from which it was then but slowly emerging, could ill accord with the lofty Platonism of the German; nor when we add to the disadvantage under which every one labours when speaking in a foreign tongue, the fact that nature had not favoured this extraordinary man with a happy delivery. From Paris, he wrote a series of articles on the early Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Provençal poetry. The article on Portuguese poetry is singularly beautiful, and contains, among other things, some remarks as new as they are just, on the influence of climate and locality in the formation of dialects. It comprises, too, an admirable critique on the noble poem of the *Lusiad*, which in allusion to the great national catastrophe that so soon followed on its publication, and by which the ancient power, energy, and glory of Portugal were for ever destroyed, he calls "the swan-like cry of a people of heroes prior to its downfall." This essay and others of the same period furnish also a proof how very soon Frederick Schlegel had framed his critical views and opinions on the various works of art. His æsthetic system seems to have been formed at a single cast—we might almost say, that from the head of this intellectual Jove, the Pallas of criticism had leaped all armed. His metaphysical theories, on the contrary, appear to have been slowly elaborated—to have undergone many modifications and improvements in the lapse of years, and never to have been moulded into a form of perfect symmetry, until the last years of his life.

During his abode in France, he addressed to a friend in Germany, a series of beautiful letters on the different schools and epochs of Christian painting. The pictorial treasures of a large part of Europe were then concentrated in the French capital; and Schlegel, availing himself of this golden opportunity, gave an account of the various master-pieces of modern art, contained in the public and private collections of Paris; interweaving in these notices, general views on the nature, object, and limits of Christian

painting. These letters the author has since revised and enlarged; and they now form one of the most delightful volumes in the general collection of his works.

The three arts, sculpture, music, and painting, correspond, according to the author, to the three parts of human consciousness, the body—the soul—and the mind. Sculpture, the most material of the fine arts, best represents the beauty of form, and the properties of sense : Music explores and gives utterance to the deepest feelings of the human soul : but it is reserved for the most spiritual of the arts—Painting, to express all the mysteries of intelligence—all the divine symbolism in nature and in man. He shows that the three arts have objects very distinct, and which must by no means be confounded. But the respective limits of these arts have not always been duly observed. Hence, confining his observation to painting, there are some artists, whom he calls sculpture-painters, like the great Angelo—others again musical painters, like Correggio and Murillo.

The various schools of art—the elder Italian—the later Italian—the Spanish—the old German—and the Flemish, pass successively under review. The distinctive qualities of the mighty masters in each school—the fantastic and truly Dantesque wildness of Giotto—the soft outline of Perugino—the depth of feeling that characterises Leonardo da Vinci—the ideal beauty—the various, the infinite charm of Raphael—the gigantic conception of Angelo—the glowing reality of Titian—the harmonious elegance of Correggio—the bold vigour of Julio Romano—the noble effort of the Caraccis to revive in a declining age the style of the great masters—the true Spanish earnestness and concentrated energy of Murillo—the deep-toned piety of Velasquez—the profound and comprehensive understanding which distinguishes his own Dürer, whom he calls the Shakspeare of painting—the distinctive qualities of these great masters (to name but a few of the more eminent), are analysed with incomparable skill, and set forth with charming diction. I regret that the limits

of this introductory memoir will not allow me to give an analysis of these enchanting letters; but I cannot forbear observing in conclusion, that at the present moment, when there seems, to be an earnest wish on all sides to revive the higher art among ourselves, whoever would undertake a translation of these letters, would, I think, confer a service on the public generally, and on our artists in particular. To the friends and followers of art, such a work is the more necessary, as the illustrious author has, in a manner, taken up the subject where Winklemann had left off. These letters are followed by others equally admirable on Gothic architecture, where the characteristic qualities of the different epochs in the civil and ecclesiastical architecture of the middle age are set forth with the same masterly powers of fancy and discrimination. This sublime art seemed to respond best to Schlegel's inmost feelings.

But I am now approaching a passage in the life of Schlegel, which will be viewed in a different light, according to the different feelings and convictions of my readers. By some his conduct will be considered a blameable apostasy from the faith of his fathers—by others, a generous sacrifice of early prejudices on the altar of truth. To disguise my own approbation of his conduct, would be to do violence to my feelings, and wrong to my principles; but to enter into a justification of his motives, would be to engage in a polemical discussion, most unseemly in an introduction to a work which is perfectly foreign to inquiries of that nature. I shall therefore confine myself to a brief statement of facts: noticing, at the same time, the intellectual condition of the two great religious parties of Germany, immediately prior and subsequent to Schlegel's change of religion.

It was on his return from France in the year 1805, and in the ancient city of Cologne, that the subject of this memoir was received into the bosom of the Catholic church. There, in that venerable city, which was so often honoured by the abode of the great founder of Christendom—Charlemagne—which abounds with so



many monuments of the arts, the learning, the opulence, and political greatness of the middle age—where the Christian Aristotle of the thirteenth century—Aquinas—had passed the first years of his academic course—there, in that venerable minster, too, one of the proudest monuments of Gothic architecture—was solemnised in the person of this illustrious man, the alliance between the ancient faith and modern science of Germany—an alliance that has been productive of such important consequences, and is yet pregnant with mightier results.

The purity of the motives which directed Schlegel in this, the most important act of his life, few would be ignorant or shameless enough to impeach. His station, his character—his virtues—all suffice to repel the very suspicion of unworthy motives; and the least reflection will show, that while in a country circumstanced like Germany, his change of religion could not procure for him greater honours and emoluments than, under any circumstances, his genius would be certain to command; that change would too surely expose him to obloquy, misrepresentation, and calumny—and what, to a heart so sensitive as his, must have been still more painful—the alienation perhaps of esteemed friends. Had he remained a Protestant, he would, instead of engaging in the service of Austria, have in all probability taken to that of Prussia, and there, doubtless, have received the same honours and distinctions which have been so deservedly bestowed on his illustrious brother. We may suppose, also, that a man of his mind and character, would not on slight and frivolous grounds, have taken a step so important; nor in a matter so momentous, have come to a decision, without a full and anxious investigation. In fact, his theological learning was extensive—he was well read in the ancient fathers—the schoolmen of the middle age, and the more eminent modern divines; and though I am not aware that he has devoted any special treatise to theology, yet the remarks scattered through his works, whether on Biblical exegesis, or dogmatic divinity, are so pregnant,

original, and profound, that we plainly see it was in his power to have given the world a "*systema theologicum*," no less masterly than that of his great predecessor—Leibnitz. The works of the early Greek fathers, indeed, he appears to have made a special object of scientific research, well knowing what golden grains of philosophy may be picked up in that sacred stream. The conversion of Schlegel was hailed with enthusiasm by the Catholics of Germany. This event occurred, indeed, at a moment equally opportune to himself and to the Catholic body. To himself—for though his noble mind would never have run a-ground amid the miserable shallows of Rationalism, yet had it not then taken refuge in the secure haven of Catholicism, it might have been sucked down in the rapid eddies of Pantheism. To the Catholic body in Germany, this event was no less opportune; and for the reasons which shall now be stated.

Germany, which in the middle age had produced so many distinguished poets, artists, and philosophers, was, at the Reformation, shorn of much of her intellectual strength. In the disastrous Thirty Years' War, which that event brought about, she saw her universities robbed of their most distinguished ornaments, and the lights, which ought to have adorned her at home, shedding their lustre on foreign lands. The general languor and exhaustion of the German mind, consequent on that fearful and convulsive struggle, was apparent enough in the literature of the age, which ensued after the treaty of Westphalia. To these causes, which produced this general declension of German intellect, must be added one which specially applies to the Catholic portion of Germany.

Every great abuse of human reason, by a natural revulsion of feeling, inspires a certain dread and distrust of its powers. This has been more than once exemplified in the history of the church. So, at this momentous period, some of the German Catholic powers sought in obscurantism, a refuge and security against religious and political innovations, and denied to that science that encou-

agement which she had a right to look for at their hands:—a policy as infatuated as it is culpable, for, while ignorance draws down contempt and disgrace on religion, it begets in its turn, as a melancholy experience has proved, those very errors and that very unbelief, against which it was designed as a protection.

Had the court of Austria acceded to the proposal of Leibnitz, for establishing at Vienna that academy of sciences which he afterwards succeeded in founding at Berlin, the glory of that great resuscitation of the German mind, which occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century, would have then probably redounded to Catholic, rather than to Protestant Germany. But the German Catholics, though they started later in the career of intellectual improvement, have at length reached, and even outstripped, their Protestant brethren in the race.

Three or four years before Schlegel embraced the Catholic faith, the signal for a return to the ancient church was given by the illustrious Count Stolberg. The religious impulse, which this great man imparted to German literature, was simultaneous with that Christian regeneration of philosophy, commenced in France by the Viscount de Bonald. And these two illustrious men, in the noble career which five-and-thirty years ago they opened in their respective countries, have been followed by a series of gigantic intellects, who have restored the empire of faith, regenerated art and science, and renovated, if I may so speak, the human mind itself.\*

Forty years ago, the Catholics of Germany, as I said, were in a state of the most humiliating intellectual inferiority to their Protestant brethren—they could point to few writers of eminence in their own body—Protestantism was the lord of the ascendant in every department of German letters;—and yet so well have the Catholics em-

\* The aristocracy of French literature, and a splendid aristocracy it is, has been for the last twenty years decidedly Catholic. The enemies of the church are to be found almost exclusively in the bourgeoisie, and still more in the canaille, of that literature.



ployed the intervening time, that they now furnish the most valuable portion of a literature, in many respects the most valuable in Europe. In every branch of knowledge they can now show writers of the highest order. To name but a few of the most distinguished, they have produced the two greatest Biblical critics of the age—Hug and Scholz—profound Biblical exegetists, like Alber, Ackermann, and, recently, Molitor, who has created a new era not only in Biblical literature, but in the Philosophy of History—divines, like Wiest, Dobmayer, Schwarz, Zimmer, Brenner, Liebermann, and Moehler, distinguished as they are for various and extensive learning, and understandings as comprehensive as they are acute—an ecclesiastical historian pre-eminent for genius, erudition, and celestial suavity, like Count Stolberg—philosophic archæologists, like Hammer and Schlosser—admirable publicists, like Gents, Adam Müller, and the Swiss Haller—and two philosophers, possessed of vast acquirements and colossal intellects like Goerres, and the subject of this memoir. In Germany, and elsewhere, Catholic genius seems only to have slumbered during the eighteenth century, in order to astonish the world by a new and extraordinary display of strength. It is undoubtedly true that several of the above-named individuals originally belonged to the Protestant church, and that that church should have given birth to men of such exalted genius, refined sensibility, and moral worth, is a circumstance which furnishes our Protestant brethren with additional claims to our love and respect. We hail these first proselytes as the pledges of a more general, and surely not a very distant re-union.

The vigorous graft of talent, which the Catholic thus received from the Protestant community, was imparted to a stock, where the powers of vegetation, long dormant, began now to revive with renovated strength. The old Catholics zealously co-operated with the new in the regeneration of all the sciences—and the effects of their joint labours have been apparent, not only in the transcendent

excellence of individual productions, but in the new life and energy infused into the learned corporations—the universities as well as the institutes of science. The mixed universities, like those of Bonn, Freyburg, and others, are in a great degree supported by Catholic talent ; and the great Catholic University of Munich, which the present excellent King of Bavaria founded in 1826, already by the celebrity of its professors, the number of its scholars, and the admirable direction of the studies, bids fair to rival the most celebrated universities in Germany.\*

Gratifying as it must have been to Schlegel to see by how many distinguished spirits his example had been followed, and to witness the rapid literary improvement of that community in Germany to which he had now united himself, he could not expect to escape those crosses and contradictions which are, in this world, the heritage of the just. The rancorous invectives which the fanatic Rationalist—Voss, had never ceased to pour out on his own early friend and benefactor—the heavenly-minded Stolberg, excited the contempt and disgust of every well-constituted mind in the Protestant community. This Cerberus of Rationalism opened his deep-mouthed cry on Schlegel

\* The words which the King of Bavaria used at the moment of founding this university, are remarkable. “ I do not wish,” said he, “ that my subjects should be learned at the cost of religion, nor religious at the cost of learning.”—See Baader’s opening speech in 1826. “ *Philosophische Schriften*,” p. 366. These are golden words, which ought to be engraven on the hearts of all princes. In other words, the monarch meant to say, I wish to consecrate science by religion, and I wish to confirm and extend religion by science. This sovereign is the most enlightened, as well as munificent, patron of learning in Europe ; and whether we consider his zeal in the cause of religion—his solicitude for the freedom and prosperity of his subjects—his profound knowledge, as well as active patronage, of art and science—and his true-hearted German frankness and probity ; he is in every respect, a worthy namesake of the illustrious Emperor Maximilian. He has assisted in making his capital a true German Athens ; and, small as it is, it may at this moment compete in art, literature, and science, with the proudest cities in Europe.

also, as he set his foot on the threshold of the Catholic church. In this instance, the religious bigotry of Voss was inflamed and exasperated by literary jealousy. By his criticisms, and masterly translation of Homer and other Greek poets, this highly-gifted man had not only rendered imperishable service to German literature, but had contributed to infuse a new life into the study of classical antiquity. Jealous, therefore of his Greeks, whom he worshipped with a sort of exclusive idolatry, he looked with distrust and aversion on every attempt to introduce the Orientals to the literary notice of the Germans. He ran down Asiatic literature of every age and nation with the most indiscriminate and unsparing violence—denounced the intentions of its admirers as evil and sinister ; and in allusion to the noble use which Stolberg, Schlegel, and others had made of their Oriental learning in support of Christianity, petulantly exclaimed on one occasion. “The Brahims have leagued with the Jesuits, in order to subvert the Protestant, or (as we should translate that word in this country) the Rationalist religion.”

It was in 1808, after several years spent in the study of Sanscrit literature, Schlegel published the result of his researches and meditations in the celebrated work entitled the “Language and Wisdom of the Indians.” This work, the first part of which is occupied with a comparative examination of the etymology and grammatical structure of the Sanscrit, Persian, Greek, Roman, and German languages, the second whereof traces the filiation and connexion of the different religious and philosophical systems that have prevailed in the ancient Oriental world, and the last of which consists of metrical versions from the sacred and didactic poems of the Hindoos—this work, I say, might not be inaptly termed a grammar, syntax, and prosody of philosophy.

With respect to etymology, Schlegel points out the number of Sanscrit words identical in sound and signification with words in the Persian, or the Greek, or the Latin, or the German, or sometimes even in all those



languages put together. He excludes words which are imitations of natural sounds, and which, therefore, might have been adopted simultaneously by nations unknown to each other; and selects those words only which are of the most simple and primitive signification, such as relate to those intellectual and physical objects most closely allied to man; as also auxiliary verbs, pronouns, nouns of number, and prepositions:—words which are less exposed than any to those casual and partial changes which conquest, commerce, and religion, introduce into language. With respect to grammatical structure, the author shows that the mode of declining nouns, and conjugating verbs, of forming the degrees of comparison in adjectives, of marking the gender and number of substantives, of changing or modifying the signification of words by prefixed articles, is common to the Sanscrit, and the other derivative languages above-mentioned. It is from this strong external and internal resemblance, these languages have received the appellation of the Indo-Germanic. The prior antiquity of the Sanscrit the author infers from the greater length and fulness of its words, and the richness and refinement of its grammatical forms; for, to use his own expression, “words, like coin, are clipped by use, and the languages, where abbreviation prevails, are ever the most recent.”

The prescient genius of Leibnitz had foretold, a century and a half ago, that the study of languages would be found one day to throw a great light on history. No one better realised this prediction than Schlegel. In the first part of this work, he has proved, by his own example, that language is not a mere instrument of knowledge, but a science in itself; and when I consider the noble use he has made of his Sanscrit learning; when I contemplate all the great and brilliant results of his Oriental researches, I must recal the sort of regret I expressed a few pages above. While, in the course of the last fifty years, a number of distinguished naturalists have carried the torch of science into the dark caverns of the earth, traced by its

light the physical revolutions of our globe, and discovered the remains of an extinct world of nature; many illustrious philologists have at the same time explored the inmost recesses of language, and, by their profound researches, brought to light the fossil remains of early history, discovered the migrations of nations and the changes of empire, and regained the lost traces of portions of our species. This remarkable parallelism in the moral and physical inquiries of the age, will be considered fortuitous by those only who have not watched the luminous course of that loving Providence, whose hand is equally visible in the progress of science, as in every other department of human activity.

But on no branch of historical knowledge have the recent philological researches thrown more light than on mythology—a science which the present age may be said to have created. While illustrious defenders of the Christian religion—a Count Stolberg\* in Germany, and still more, an Abbé de la Mennais† in France, treading in the footsteps of the ancient fathers, and of the abler modern apologists, like Grotius, Huet, and others, have victoriously proved the existence of a primeval revelation, the diffusion and perpetuity of its doctrines among all the nations of the world, civilised and barbarous—the compatibility of a belief in the unity of the God-head with the crime of idolatry, ranked by the apostle, “among the works of the flesh,”—the local nature and object of the Mosaic law, destined by the Almighty for the special use of a people charged with maintaining, in its purity, that worship of Jehovah mostly abandoned or neglected by the nations, who, “though they knew God, did not glorify him as God”—and favoured also with the promises of “the good things to come,” intrusted with the

\* “Geschichte der Religion.”—1804-11.

† “Essai sur l’Indifférence en Matière de Religion :” 4 vols., 8vo. Paris, 1823. A work where learning, eloquence, and philosophy have laid their richest offerings at the shrine of Christianity.

prophetic records of the life and ministry of that Messiah, of whose future coming the Gentiles had only a vague and obscure anticipation:—while these illustrious defenders of religion, I say, were proving the agreement of all the heathen nations in the great dogmas of the primitive revelation; another class of inquirers (and among these was Schlegel) laboured to show the points of divergence in the different systems of heathenism, studied the peculiar genius of each, and traced the influence which climate, circumstance, and national character have exerted over all. The object of the former was to point out the general threads of primeval truth in the fabric of Paganism—that of the latter to trace the later and fanciful intertexture of superstition. For in that fantastic web, which we call mythology, truth and fiction, poetry and history, physics and philosophy, are all curiously interwoven. Hence the arduous nature of those researches—hence the difficulties and perils which await the investigator at almost every step.

Of the second part of this work on India, which treats of the religious and philosophical systems of the early Asiatic nations, it is the less necessary here to speak, as the reader will find the subject amply discussed in the course of the following sheets. It may be proper, however, to observe, that the different philosophic errors mentioned by Schlegel, as prevalent in the ancient Asiatic world, may all be resolved to two systems—Dualism and Pantheism—the two earliest heresies in the history of religion—the two gulfs, into which dark, but presumptuous, reason fell, when, rejecting the light of revelation, she attempted to explain those unfathomable mysteries—the origin of evil on the one hand, and the co-existence of the finite and the infinite on the other.

On the whole, the “Wisdom of the Indians” is an admirable little book, whether we consider the profound and extensive philological knowledge it displays—the rich variety of historical perceptions it discloses—the clearness of its arrangement, the elegant simplicity of



the style. In the seven and twenty years which have elapsed since this production saw the light, the subjects discussed in it have undergone ample investigation—many of its observations have passed into the current coin of the learned world—truths which it vaguely surmised, have since been fully established—and the knowledge of Indian literature and philosophy have been vastly extended ; yet this is one of those works which will be always read with a lively interest. It is thus that, in despite of the progress of classical philology, the writings of the great critical restorers of ancient literature have, after the lapse of three centuries, retained their place in public estimation. It is pleasing to watch the stream of learning in its various meanderings—to trace it as its winds through a broader, but not always deeper, channel, sullied and disturbed not unfrequently by accidental pollutions—it is pleasing to trace it to its source, where, from underneath the rock, it wells out in all its limpid purity. Prior to the publication of this work, the Semitic languages of the East were alone, I believe, cultivated with much ardour in Germany ; its appearance had the effect of directing the national energies towards an intellectual region, where they were destined to meet with the most brilliant success ; and, if Germany may now boast with reason of her illustrious professors of Sanscrit ; if France, under the Restoration, made such rapid progress in Oriental literature ; if England, roused from her inglorious apathy, has at last founded an Asiatic society in London, and more recently, the Boden professorship at Oxford—these events are, in a great degree, attributable to the enthusiasm which this little book excited.

In the year 1810, Schlegel delivered, at Vienna, a course of lectures on “Modern History.” This book, which was in two volumes, 8vo., has long been out of print ; and the volumes destined to contain it in the general collection of the author’s works, have not yet been published. Hence no account of it can be here given—a circumstance which I the more regret, as, in

the opinion of some, it is Schlegel's masterpiece. It embodied in a systematic form the views and opinions contained in a variety of the author's earlier historical essays, which are also out of print, and have not yet been republished. In it, I know, are to be found the detailed proofs and evidences of many positions advanced in the second volume of the work, to which this memoir is prefixed.

We should, however, form a very inadequate estimate of the services this great writer has rendered to literature, and of the influence he has exerted on his age, were we to confine our attention solely to his larger works. Throughout his whole life, he was an assiduous contributor to periodical literature—a species of writing which, in the present age, has been cultivated with signal success in England, France, and Germany. At the commencement of the present century, he edited, in conjunction with Tieck, Novalis and his brother, a literary journal, entitled the “*Athenæum*,” and afterwards successively conducted political and philosophical journals, such as the “*Europa*,”—the “*German Museum*,”—and lastly, the “*Concordia* ;” giving, latterly, also, his zealous support to the “*Vienna Quarterly Review*.” Some of his earlier critiques have already been noticed. Among the shorter literary essays, which appeared in the twelve years that elapsed from 1800 to 1812, I may notice the one entitled “*The Epochs of Literature*,” 1800; and which may be considered the first rude outline of those immortal lectures on the “*History of Literature*,” which he delivered in 1812. Often as he has occasion to treat the same subject, yet such is the inexhaustible wealth of his intellect, he seldom tires by repetition. Thus his minutest fragments, like the sketches of Raphael, are full of interest and variety. Another essay of the same year, “*On the Different Style in Goethe's Earlier and Later Works*,” shows with what a discriminating eye the young critic had already scanned all the heights and the depths of this wonderful poet. Of this great writer, the moral

direction of some of whose writings he reprobated in the strongest degree, he did not hesitate to say that, like Dante in the middle age, he was the founder of a new order of poetry—that he had been the first to restore the art to the elevation from which, since the commencement of the seventeenth century, it had sunk—that he united the amenity of Homer—the ideal beauty of Sophocles—and the wit of Aristophanes. The opinion which in youth he had formed of the great national poet of Germany, his maturer experience fully confirmed. Eight years afterwards, he published a long and elaborate critique on Goethe's lays, songs, elegies, and miscellaneous poems. Pre-eminently great as Goethe is in every branch of poetry, in songs he is allowed to stand perfectly unrivalled. "From the shores of the Baltic, to the frontiers of Alsace," says the Baron d'Eckstein, "the lyric poetry of Goethe lives in the hearts and on the lips of an enthusiastic people." In this reviewal we find, among other things, a learned and ingenious dissertation on the various species of lyric poetry—the lay, the romance, the ballad, and the occasional poem; on the nature, object, and limits of each—their points of resemblance, and points of difference, together with observations on the fitness of certain metres for certain kinds of poetry.

From his youth upwards, Schlegel was in the habit of seeking, in the delightful worship of the muse, a solace and relaxation from his severer and more laborious pursuits. Without making pretensions to anything of a very high order, his poetry is remarkable for a chaste, classical diction, great harmony and flexibility of versification, a sweet elegance of fancy, and, at times, depth and tenderness of feeling. Friendship, patriotism and piety, are the noble themes to which he consecrates his strains. What spirit and fire in his lines on Mohammed's flight from Mecca! What a noble burst of nationality in his address to the Rhine! How touching the verses to the memory of his much-loved friend, Novalis—that sweet flower of poesy and philosophy, cut off in its early



bloom! In the lines to Corinna, what lofty consolations are administered to that illustrious woman, under the persecutions she had to sustain from the Imperial despotism of France! And in the sonnet entitled "Peace," 1806, what lessons of exalted wisdom are given to the men of our time!

The longer poem, entitled "Hercules Musagetes," is among the most admired of the author's pieces. His original poems equal in number, though not in excellence, those of his brother; for it would be absurd to expect that this universal genius should shine equally in every department of letters. The flexible, graceful, harmonious genius of Augustus William Schlegel has at different periods enriched his own tongue with the noblest literary treasures of ancient and modern Italy, of Portugal, Spain and England; and his immortal translations, which have superior merit to any original poems, but those of the highest order, are admitted by competent judges to have done more than the works of any writer, except Goethe, for improving the rhythm and poetical diction of his country. The great poetical powers which his short original pieces, as well as his translations display, make it a matter of regret that he should have so much confined himself to translation, and never venture on the composition of a great poem.

Both these incomparable brothers are minds eminently poetical, and eminently philosophical. In one, the poetic element prevails—in the other, the philosophical element, and, by a great deal, predominates. In their early productions we can scarcely discriminate the features of these apparently intellectual twins: but, as their genius ripens to manhood, the one becomes an ethereal Apollo, full of grace, energy, and majesty—the other an intellectual Hercules, of the most gigantic strength and colossal stature.

It was in the Spring of 1812 that Schlegel delivered, before a numerous and distinguished audience at Vienna, his lectures on ancient and modern literature. Of this

work, which a German critic has characterised "as a great national possession of the Germans," and which has been translated into several European languages, and is so well known to the English reader by the excellent translation which appeared in 1818, it is unnecessary to speak at much length. Here were concentrated in one focus all those radii of criticism that this powerful mind had so long emitted. Here, at the bidding of a potent magician, the lords of intellect—the mighty princes of literature of all times—

" The dead, yet sceptred, sovereigns, who still rule  
Our spirits from their urns—"

pass before our eyes in stately procession—each with his distinct physiognomy—his native port—and all clothed with a fresh immortality. Literature is considered not merely in reference to art—but in relation to the influence it has exerted on the destinies of mankind, and to the various modifications which the religion, the government, the laws, the manners, and habits of different nations have caused it to undergo. The first quality that must strike us in this work is the admirable arrangement which has formed so many and such various materials into one harmonious whole. By what an easy and natural transition does the author pass from the Greek to the Roman literature! With what admirable skill he passes, in the age of Hadrian, from the old Roman to the oriental literature, and from the latter back again to the Christian literature of the middle age! How skilfully he has interwoven, in this sketch of oriental letters, the notices of the ancients and the researches of the moderns on the East! The next characteristic of this work is gigantic learning. To that intimate familiarity with the poets, historians, orators and philosophers of classical antiquity which his earlier writings had displayed—to the profound knowledge of Oriental, and especially Sanscrit, literature evinced in the above-noticed work on India—we now see added a knowledge of the long-buried treasures of the old German and

Provençal poetry of the middle age—the scholastic philosophy—the principal modern European literatures in their several periods of bloom, maturity and decay. What a strong light, also, is thrown on some dark passages in the history of philosophy! Where shall we find a more curious, graphic, and interesting account of the mystics of the middle age, and of the German and Italian Platonists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries! Every page bears the stamp of long and diligent inquiry, and original investigation. The minute traits—the accurate drawing—the freshness and vividness of colouring—the truth and life-like reality in this whole picture of literature, prove that the artist drew from the original, and not a copy. No better proof can be adduced of the *accuracy* as well as extent of learning which distinguished this illustrious man and his brother, than the fact that their different works on classical, oriental and modern literature have received the approbation of such scholars, as made those several branches of knowledge the special objects of their study and inquiry. Thus their labours on Greek and Roman poetry met with the high sanction of a Heyne, a Wolf, and other distinguished Hellenists—their works on Sanscrit literature have been commended by a Guignault—a Remusat—a Chezy, and our own academicians of Calcutta; and their critiques on Shakspeare and the early English poets have been approved by the national critics, and especially by one who had devoted many years to the study of our elder poetry—I mean that able critic and accomplished scholar—the late Mr. Gifford.

The other and more important characteristics of this work are delicacy of taste, solidity of judgment, vigour and boldness of fancy, and depth and comprehensiveness of understanding. Here we see united, though in a more eminent degree, the acuteness, sagacity, and erudition of Lessing—the high artist-like enthusiasm of Winklemann—and that exquisite sense of the beautiful, that vigorous, flexible and excursive fancy which made the genius of Herder at home in every region of art, and in every clime



of poesy. The intellectual productions of every age and country—the primitive oriental world—classical antiquity—the middle age—and modern times, pass under review, and receive the same impartial attention—the same just appreciation—the same masterly characterisation. In a work so full of beauties, it is difficult to make selections—but, were I called upon to point out specimens of succinct criticism, which, for justness and delicacy of discrimination—a poetic soaring of conception—and depth of observation, are unsurpassed, perhaps, in the whole range of literature, I should name the several critiques on Homer—Lucretius—Dante—Calderon—and Cervantes. The part least well done is that which treats of the literature of the last two centuries; but from the vast multiplicity of details, it was impossible for the author, within his narrow limits, to do full justice to this part of his subject. He has not paid due homage to several of the great writers that adorned the reign of Louis XIV. He drops but one word on Pascal, and passes Mallébranche over in silence; though if ever there were writers deserving the notice of the historian of literature and philosophy, it was surely those two eminent men. In general, Schlegel was too fond of crowding his figures within a narrow canvass—hence many of them could not be placed in a suitable light or position; and several of his heads appear but half-sketched. This is not a mere book of criticism—it is a philosophical work in the widest sense of the word—the genius of the author is ever soaring above his subject—ever springing from the lower world of art, to those high and aerial regions of philosophy still more native to his spirit. To him the beautiful was only the symbol of the divine—hence the tone of earnestness and solemnity which he carries even into æsthetic dissertations. The style too, of this “History of Literature” leaves little to be desired. To the lightness, clearness, and elegance of diction which had distinguished Schlegel’s earlier productions, was here united a greater richness and copiousness of expression, and a more harmo-

nious fulness and roundness of period. From this time, however, (if an Englishman may presume to offer an opinion on such a subject,) a decline may, I think, be observed in his style. His mind, indeed, seemed to gain strength and expansion with the advance of years—the horizon of his views was perpetually enlarged—and in vastness of conception, and profundity of observation, his last philosophical works outshine even those of his early manhood. Yet to whatever cause we are to attribute the fact—whether it be that his last works had not received from his hands the same careful revisal—or whether some men as they advance in life, become as negligent in their style as in their dress—or whether he at last gave in to the bad practice so prevalent in Germany, of disregarding the lighter graces of diction—certain it is, that his later writings, much as they may have gained in excellence of matter, and presenting, as they do, passages perhaps of superior power and splendour, are, on the whole, no longer characterised by the same uniform terseness and perspicuity of language.

With the “History of Ancient and Modern Literature,” Schlegel closed his critical career. He never afterwards mounted the tribunal of criticism, except on one occasion, when he awarded in favour of the early poetical effusions of M. de la Martine, a solemn sentence of approbation.\* He now devoted himself with exclusive ardour to the graver concerns of politics and philosophy. Nor can we regret this resolution on his part, when we reflect that as far as regards literature, he had done all that was necessary—that he had now only to leave to time to work out his æsthetic principles in the German mind—and that

\* In the beautiful critique inserted in the Concordia on M. de la Martine’s “Meditations Poétiques,” (1820) Schlegel observes that Lord Byron was the representative of a by-gone poesy, and La Martine the herald of a new Christian poetry that was to come. Comparing the three greatest contemporary poets out of his own country, Scott, Byron, and La Martine, Schlegel saw in the productions of the first, the poetry of a vague reminiscence—in those of the second, the poetry of despair ; and in those of the last, the

should further elucidation on these topics be required, the distinguished Tieck, and his illustrious brother were at hand to furnish the requisite aid. But in metaphysics and political philosophy, what German could supply his place?

In the four eventful years which elapsed from 1808 to 1812, occupations as new to Schlegel as they were important and various in themselves, filled up the active life of this extraordinary man. In the Austrian campaign of 1809, he was employed as secretary to the Archduke Charles; and it is said that his eloquent proclamations had considerable effect in kindling the patriotism of the Austrian people. It was about the same time he founded a daily paper, called "the Austrian Observer," which has since become the official organ of the Austrian government. The establishment of this journal—the situation which Schlegel had previously held at the head-quarters of the Archduke Charles—the diplomatic missions in which, after the peace of 1814, he was employed by Prince Metternich, who, be it said to the glory of that illustrious statesman, ever honoured him with his friendship and patronage—and finally the pension, letters of nobility, and office of Aulic Councillor, which the emperor was pleased to confer on him, may induce some of my readers to suppose that his political views were identified with those of the government in whose service he was occasionally engaged; and that he was an unqualified ad-

commencement of a poetry of hope.\* Much as he reprobated the anti-christian spirit and tendency of Lord Byron's muse, and much as he rejoiced that its pernicious influence was in some degree counteracted by the noble effusions of the French rhapsodist, he still rendered full justice to the great genius of the British bard. He calls him in one of his last works, "the wonderful English poet—perhaps the greatest—certainly the most remarkable poet of our times:"†—an encomium which Byron's admirers may learn to appreciate, when they remember who his contemporaries were, and who the critic was, that pronounced this judgment.

\* See his "History of Literature," vol. 2. New edition in German.

† "Philosophie des Lebens," p. 21.



mirer of the whole foreign and domestic policy of Austria. No conception can be more erroneous. As secretary to the Archduke Charles, he knew he lent his support to a government which had shown itself the most honest, vigilant, and powerful friend of German independence—he knew he fought the battle of his country against an unholy and execrable tyranny, which, whatever shape it might assume—whether that of a lawless democracy or a ruthless despotism—was alike inimical to Christianity—alike fatal to the peace, the happiness, and the liberties of every country it subdued. In the next place, it is not usual, even in the representative system, still less under a government constituted like that of Austria, to exact a perfect conformity of political sentiments between diplomatic agents and the heads of administration. Again the pension, title, and dignity which Schlegel received at the hands of the Emperor of Austria, were the well-earned recompense of distinguished services, and not the badges of servility. Lastly, with respect to the “Austrian Observer,” his motive in establishing that journal was purely patriotic. To enkindle the war-like enthusiasm of the Austrian people—to unite the weakened, divided, and distracted states of Germany in a common league against a common foe—to procure for his country the first of all political blessings—that without which all others are valueless—national independence; such was his object in this undertaking—such the object of every sincere and reflecting patriot of Germany at that period. The leaning towards a stationary absolutism, which has marked this journal since Schlegel gave up the conduct of it, belongs to its present editors; but that tone of dignified moderation, which, according to the express acknowledgment of German Liberals, it carries into the discussion of political matters—that aversion from all extreme and violent parties and measures in politics, which distinguishes this journal, betray the illustrious hand which first set it in motion.

Nothing, in fact, can be more dissimilar than the policy

long followed by the Austrian government, and that which Schlegel would have recommended, and did in fact recommend. What, especially since the time of the Emperor Joseph II., has characterised the general policy of this government? In respect to ecclesiastical matters, (though the evil was mitigated by the piety of the late emperor), we still see that government, by a restless, encroaching spirit of jealousy, hamper the jurisdiction, and cramp the moral and intellectual energies of the clergy. In relation to the people, its sway is mild and paternal, indeed, but at the same time, intrusive, meddling, and vexatious—it is, in short, a dead, mechanical absolutism, where all spontaneity of popular action has been destroyed—all equilibrium of powers overturned—and where royalty, by an irregular attraction, has disturbed, deranged, or compressed the movements of the other social bodies. With respect to science, those best acquainted with the policy of this government affirm, that its patronage is too exclusively confined to the mechanical arts and the physical sciences. In short, nowhere has the political materialism of the eighteenth century attained a more systematic development than in the Austrian government. Yet in that empire are to be found all the elements of a great social regeneration; and to a minister desirous of earning enduring fame, to a monarch ambitious of living for ever in the hearts of a grateful people, the noblest opportunity is presented for reviving, renovating, and bringing to perfection the free, glorious, but now, alas! mutilated and half-effaced institutions of the middle age.

If such is the policy of the Austrian government in relation to the church, to liberty, and to science, it is needless to observe how entirely opposed it was to the views of Schlegel. His whole life was devoted to the cultivation and diffusion of elegant literature and liberal science; and any policy which tended to obstruct their progress, or shackle the energies of the human mind, must have been most adverse to his feelings and wishes. As a sin-

cere friend to religious liberty, as well as a good Catholic, he must have deplored the bondage under which the Church groaned; and how ardently attached he was to the cause of popular freedom, how utterly averse from any thing like absolutism in politics, the reader will soon have an opportunity of judging for himself.

But before I quit this subject, I cannot forbear noticing the very exaggerated statements sometimes put forth by party spirit in England, respecting the state of learning in the Austrian empire. Without pretending to any personal knowledge of that country, there are, however, a certain number of admitted and well attested facts, which prove, that however inferior in mental cultivation Austria may be to some other states of Catholic as well as Protestant Germany, she yet holds a distinguished place in literature and science. The very general diffusion of popular education in that country—the great success with which all the arts and sciences connected with industry are cultivated—the admirable organisation of its medical board—the distinguished physicians, theoretical as well as practical, whom it has produced—the great attention bestowed on strategy and the sciences subservient to it—the excellence to which the histrionic art has there attained—the universal passion for music, and the unrivalled degree of perfection the art has there reached—the acknowledged superiority of the “Quarterly Review of Vienna,” (the “Wiener Jahrbücher”)—lastly, the favour, countenance, and encouragement extended by the Austrian public to the oral lectures and published writings of the eminent literary characters, whether natives or foreigners, who for the last thirty years have thrown such a glory over their capital—all these incontrovertible facts, I say, prove this people to have reached an advanced stage of intellectual refinement. So far from finding among the Viennese that Bœotian dulness of which we sometimes hear them accused, Augustus William Schlegel (and his testimony is impartial, for he is neither a native nor resident



of Austria,) confesses\* that he discovered in them great aptness of intelligence, a keen relish for the beauties of poetry, and much of the vivacity of the southern temperament. And the crowded audiences which flocked to the philosophical lectures Frederick Schlegel delivered on various occasions at Vienna, a metaphysician of equal celebrity might in vain look for in another European capital I could name, and which certainly considers itself very enlightened. There is no doubt that this Archduchy of Austria, which in the middle age produced some of the most celebrated Minnesingers, would, with free institutions and a more generous policy on the part of the government, soon attain that intellectual station, to which its political greatness, and recent as well as ancient military glory, alike bid it to aspire. If the statesmen that rule the destinies of that country were to regard the matter merely in a political point of view, they might see what moral dignity, weight, and importance, the patronage of letters has given to the Protestant King of Prussia on the one hand, and to the Catholic King of Bavaria on the other.

For several years after the peace of 1814, Schlegel was one of the representatives of the Court of Vienna at the diet of Frankfort. These diplomatic functions occasioned a temporary interruption to his literary pursuits—an interruption which will be regretted by those only who have not reflected on the advantages of active life to the man of letters. The high dignity with which he was now invested—the commanding view which his station gave him of European politics—the insight he was enabled to obtain into the political state and relations of Germany—as well as the society and conversation of some of the most illustrious statesmen of the age, were all of inestimable service to the publicist; and by making him acquainted with the excellences as well as defects of

\* See the Preface to the "Lectures on Dramatic Literature," in the French translation.

existing governments, the obstacles which retard the progress of improvement, the ill success which sometimes attends even well-considered measures of reform, were calculated to check the rashness of speculation, inspire sobriety of judgment, and at the same time enlarge his views of political philosophy. In the year 1818, he returned to Vienna, and resumed his literary occupations with renewed ardour. He wrote the following year in the "Vienna Quarterly Review," (the "Wiener Jahrbücher,") a long and elaborate reviewal of M. Rhode's work on Primitive History. This reviewal, which from its length may fairly be called a treatise, contains a clear, succinct, and masterly exposition of those views on the early history of mankind, which he has on some points more fully developed in the work, of which a translation is now given. This article, which alternately delights and astonishes us by the historical learning, the philological skill, the curious geographical lore, and the bold, profound and original philosophy it displays, may be considered one of the most admirable commentaries ever written on the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis; and in none of his shorter essays has the genius of the illustrious writer shone more pre-eminently than in this.\*

The year 1820 was marked by the simultaneous outbreak of several revolutions in different countries of Europe, and by symptoms of general discontent, distrust, and agitation in other parts. The violent, though transitory, volcanic irruptions which convulsed and desolated the south of Europe, scattered sparkles and ashes on the already burning soil of France, and shook on her rocky bed even the ocean-queen. In Germany, the wild revolutionary enthusiasm which pervaded a large portion of the youth—the frenzied joy with which the assassination of Kotzebue had been hailed—the wide spread of associations fatal to the peace and freedom of mankind, and the pernicious anti-social doctrines proclaimed in many writings, and even from some professorial chairs, led the

\* See "Sämmtliche Werke," vol. x. p. 267.

different governments to measures of severe scrutiny and zealous vigilance, likely by a re-action to prove dangerous to the cause of liberty. The causes of these various social phenomena it is not my business here to point out; but I may observe in passing, that these discontents—these struggles—these revolutions, had their origin partly in natural causes, partly in the errors both of governments and nations. The general disjointing of all interests—the derangement in the concerns of all classes of society produced by the transition from a state of long protracted warfare to a state of general peace—the blunders committed by the Congress of Vienna in the settlement of Europe—the blind recurrence in some European states to the thoroughly worn-out absolutism of the eighteenth century, injurious as that political system had proved to religion, to social order, and to national prosperity—in other countries, a rash imitation of the mere outward forms of the British constitution, without any true knowledge of its internal organism—above all, the deadly legacy of anti-Christian doctrines and anti-social principles; which the last age had bequeathed to the present—such, independently of minor and more local reasons, are the principal causes to which I think the impartial voice of history will ascribe the political commotions of that period. It was now evident that the great work of European restoration had been but half-accomplished; and that the malignant Typhon of revolution was collecting his scattered members, recruiting his exhausted energies, and preparing anew to assault, oppress, and desolate the world.

Alarmed at the political aspect of Germany and Europe, Schlegel deemed the moment had arrived, when every friend of religion and social order should be found at his post. The importance of the struggle—the violence of parties—the false line of policy adopted by some governments—the errors and delusions too prevalent even among many of the defenders of legitimacy, rendered the warning voice of an enlightened mediator more necessary than ever. In conjunction with his illustrious friend,



Adam Müller, and some of the Redemptorists—a most able, amiable, and exemplary body of ecclesiastics at Vienna—he established, in 1820, a religious and political journal, entitled “Concordia.” In a series of articles, entitled Characteristics of the Age, and which contain a most masterly sketch of the political state and prospects of the principal European countries, Schlegel has given a fuller exposition of his political principles, than in any other of his writings which have come under my notice. The extreme interest and importance of the matters discussed in these articles, and still more, the light they throw on very many passages in the following translation, have induced me to lay before the reader a rapid analysis of such parts as embody the author’s political system. I shall therefore now proceed to this task, premising that in this analysis I shall occasionally interweave a remark of my own, to illustrate the author’s views:—

There are five essential and eternal corporations in human society—the family—the church—the state—the guild—and the school.

I. The family is the smallest and simplest corporation—the ground-work of all the others;—and on its right constitution and moral development depend, as we shall presently see, the freedom, prosperity, and enlightenment of the state, the guild, and the school.

II. With respect to the church, its constitution under the primitive revelation was purely domestic; religious instruction and the solemnisation of religious offices, being intrusted to the heads of families and tribes. In the Mosaic law, the Almighty founded a *public* ministry in the synagogue, which was an admirable type of the future constitution of the Christian church. Unlike the local and temporary synagogue, the Christian church is perpetual and universal—but like the synagogue, it hath a public ministry. “This church,” to use Schlegel’s own words, “is that great and divine corporation which embraces all other social relations, protects them under its vault, crowns them with dignity, and lovingly imparts

to them the power of a peculiar consecration. The church is not a mere substitute formed to supply or repair the deficiencies of the other social institutes and corporations; but is itself a free, peculiar, independent corporation, pervading all states, and in its object exalted far above them—an union and society with God, from whom it immediately derives its sustaining power.”\*

III. Between these two corporations—the family, that deep, solid foundation of the social edifice below—and the church, that high, expansive and illumined vault above—stands the state. Schlegel defines the state, “a corporation armed for the maintenance of peace.” Its existence says he, is bound up with all the other corporations; it lives and moves in them; they are its natural organs; and as soon as the state, whether with despotic or anarchical views, attempts to impede the natural functions of these organs, to disturb or derange their peculiar sphere of action, it impairs its own vital powers, and prepares the way sooner or later for its own destruction.”

IV. There are two intermediate corporations—the guild, which stands between the family and the state; and the school, which stands between the church and the state. By the guild, Schlegel understands “every species of traffic, industry, and commerce, bound together in every part of the world by the common tie of money.” The object of this corporation is the advancement of the material interests of the family; interests which it is the bounden duty of the state to protect and promote.

V. By the school, the author signifies “the whole intellectual culture of mankind—not merely the existing republic of letters, but all the tradition of science from the remotest ages to the present times.” This corporation, I should say, has for its object the glorification of the church, the utility of the state, and the intellectual activity of the family, or rather its individual members.

But among these primary corporations, it is the state which forms the immediate object of the author’s inquiries.

\* “Concordia,” page 59.

I shall now proceed to lay before the reader the several characteristics which, according to the author, distinguish the Christian state, or the state animated with the spirit of Christianity.

§§ I. *The Christian state is without slaves, and honours the sanctity of the nuptial tie.*

Christianity first mitigated, and then abolished slavery. Slavery is incompatible with the spirit of Christianity, not only on account of the mal-treatment, injuries, and oppression to which it subjects men; not only on account of the dangers to which it exposes female virtue; but chiefly and especially, because the state of slavery is one inconsistent with the dignity of a being made after the likeness of God. This complete emancipation of the lower classes from the bonds of servitude pre-eminently distinguishes the modern Christian states from those of classical antiquity on the one hand, and those of the primitive Oriental world on the other. In the former, domestic and predial slavery were carried to the last degree of harshness and severity—in the latter, especially in India, a totally different form of servitude existed. There the innocent descendants of those who had been guilty of certain crimes, or who had contracted unlawful marriages, were doomed to a state of irremediable oppression, debarred from all civil rights, and excluded from the very charities of life. The fate of these hapless beings was even harder than that of the slaves among the ancient Greeks and Romans. As the exclusion of a whole class from the rights of citizenship and the offices of religion is incompatible with the principles of Christian love; so the hereditary transmission of the sacerdotal dignity is inconsistent with the Christian doctrine, which inculcates the necessity of a divine call to the priesthood. Hence the incompatibility which exists between the system of castes and the Christian religion.

The author shows that the various species of vassalage are clearly distinguishable from slavery; yet that even



these have yielded to the benign spirit of Christianity. The existence of slavery in the Christian colonies nowise militates against the principle here laid down ; for the slave-trade has ever been condemned by all Christian nations as wicked and unjust ; and slavery, the introduction of which into the colonies the church had so strenuously opposed, was afterwards tolerated by her only as a necessary evil. For, as Schlegel observes with his characteristic wisdom, “ the sudden abolition of an evil that has become an inveterate habit in society, is mostly attended with danger, and frequently works another wrong of an opposite kind.”\* But this is one of those truths, which the giddy, reckless spirit of a spurious philanthropy can never be made to comprehend.

As the Christian state abhors slavery from its inconsistency with the dignity of man, so, for the same reason, it guards with jealous vigilance the sanctity and inviolability of the nuptial tie. Polygamy degrades woman from her natural rank in society—destroys the happiness of private life—poisons the very well-springs of education—and connected as it too frequently is with a traffic in slaves, plunges the male sex into irremediable degradation.† This practice is supposed to have originated with the Cainites in the ante-diluvian world ; but for high and prudential reasons, it was tolerated rather than approved under the patriarchal dispensation and the Mosaic law. In the ancient Asiatic monarchies, especially in the period of their decline, this usage sometimes prevailed to a licentious extent ; but in the modern Mahometan states, where polygamy is indulged in to the most libidinous excess, this defective constitution of the family has proved one of the greatest barriers to political and intellectual improvement.

In ancient Greece and Rome, how far superior was the legislation on marriage ! How much more healthful and vigorous was the constitution of domestic society ! What

\* “ Concordia,” page 363.

† See “ Concordia.”

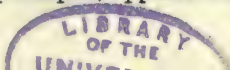
a fine idea do we conceive of the early Romans, when we read that though the law sanctioned divorce, yet that for the first five hundred years, no individual took advantage of such a law! In the corrupt ages of Imperial Rome, divorce, permitted and practised on the most frivolous pretexts, was productive of more baneful consequences than polygamy in its worst form.

Polygamy is proscribed in all Christian states. In the Catholic church, marriage is raised to the dignity of a sacrament; and divorce is not permitted, even in the case of adultery. Hereby woman is invested with the highest degree of dignity, and even influence—the union and happiness of the family are best secured—and the peace and stability of the state itself acquire the strongest guarantees. It is well known that some of the ablest divines of the Church of England also uphold in all cases the indissolubility of the nuptial tie; and the British legislature, by according divorce only after adultery, and by rendering the obtaining of it a matter of difficulty and expense, has widely opposed limitations to the practice. Yet, as was truly observed some years ago in parliament, the increase in the number of applications for divorce, is one among the many signs of the decline of morality in this country.

The principal Protestant churches regard marriage as a religious ceremony; and so the general proposition of Schlegel is correct, that all Christian states recognise the sanctity of the nuptial bond. And here is one of the main causes of the superior happiness, freedom, and civilisation enjoyed by Christian nations.

§§ II. *Christian justice is founded on a system of equity, and the Christian state has from its constitution, an essentially pacific tendency.*

Schlegel observes that the difference between strict law and equitable law is the most arduous problem in all jurisprudence. Strict law is an abstract law, deduced from certain general principles, applied without the least



regard to adventitious circumstances. Equity, on the other hand, pays due regard to such circumstances, examines into the peculiar state of things, and the mutual relations of parties ; and forms her decisions not according to the caprice of fancy, or the waywardness of feeling, but according to the general principles of right, applied to the variable circumstances and situations of parties.

According to the author's definition, the object of the institution of the state is the maintenance of internal and external peace. Justice is the only basis of peace ; but *justice is here the means, and not the end*. If justice were the end for which the state was constituted, then neither external nor internal peace could ever be procured or maintained ; for the state would then be compelled to wage eternal war against all who, at home or abroad, were guilty of injustice, and could never lay down its arms till that injustice were removed.

As peace is essentially the end of that great corporation called the state, it follows that the justice by which its foreign and domestic policy must be regulated, is not that strict or absolute justice spoken of above, but that temperate or conciliatory equity, which is alone applicable to the concerns of men. The maxim, "a thousand years' wrong cannot constitute an hour's right," if applied to civil jurisprudence, would introduce interminable confusion, hardship, and misery in the affairs of private life, and if applied to constitutional and international law, would lead to perpetual anarchy at home, and to endless, exterminating war abroad.

The Christian religion, as it comes from God, is eminently social—hence it abhors the principle of absolute or inexorable right, whether applied to civil or public law—hence the Christian state, or the state animated with the spirit of Christianity, is in its tendency essentially pacific.

This pacific policy of the state, however, so far from excluding, necessarily implies the firm, uncompromising



vindication of its rights and interests, whether at home or abroad ; and the repression of evil doers within, or a just war without, is often the only means of attaining the object for which the state was constituted—to wit, the maintenance of peace. On the other hand the revolutionary state, or the state where, in opposition to existing rights and interests, new rights and interests are violently enforced ; and where, in subversion of all established institutions, new institutions, conceived according to abstract and arbitrary theories, are violently introduced ; the revolutionary state, I say, is, from its nature and origin—no matter what form it may assume—necessarily driven to a course of iniquitous policy—to disorganising tyranny within, and to fierce relentless hostility without.

Against the pacific character of the Christian state, the bloody wars of Charlemagne with the Saxons, the Crusades of a later period, and the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are commonly objected. In the course of the work, to which this memoir is prefixed, the reader will find these several objections victoriously answered.

§§ III. *The Christian state recognises the legal existence of Corporations, and depends on their organic co-operation.*

The author has before shown that the Christian religion, following the principle of conciliatory equity, recognises, without reference to their origin, all existing rights and interests. Hence the Christian religion can co-exist, and has in fact co-existed, with every form or species of government. But there are some governments which, from their spirit and constitution, are more congenial than others to Christianity ; and it is in this sense we speak of the Christian state.

We have already seen that there are five essential and eternal corporations—the family—the church—the state—the guild—and the school. These great corporations

have each their several and subordinate institutions or corporations, which are accidental and transitory by nature, and consequently vary with time, place, and circumstances.

The Christian state is that which best secures and preserves to those essential corporations, and all their subordinate institutions, their due sphere of action. Hence our author shows that, under certain circumstances, and in certain countries, the republic, whether democratic or aristocratic, may answer that end as well or even better than monarchy ; and that it is only because, in great empires, monarchy is best calculated to maintain the free development and organic co-operation of corporations, that it may be called, *par excellence*, the Christian state. But what form of monarchy is best adapted for this end? The absolute monarchy\* is certainly the least: there then remain only the representative system, and the constitution of the three estates, or, as the Germans call that mode of government, *Stände-verfassung*. Schlegel proceeds to examine the respective characteristics of those two forms of government, and to show the points in which they agree, and in which they differ. The constitution of estates is the old, legitimate constitution of European states, whether republican or monarchical ; but in too many countries, this noble institution has been undermined by despotism, or destroyed by revolution. On the other hand, the representative system is comparatively modern, and, on the continent, has, amid the great convulsions produced by the French revolution, sprung out of a defective and superficial imitation of the British constitution. It is therefore to the latter constitution the author, when he has occasion to treat of the representative system, principally directs the attention of his readers.

As to the points of resemblance between this system,

\* In a number of the "Concordia" for 1820, Adam Müller frankly declared his opinion, that all the friends of social order would soon concur in the necessity of re-establishing the constitution of the three estates. This is language which at Vienna is as bold as it is auspicious.

and the states-constitution, both have legislative assemblies—in both, petitions and remonstrances are addressed to the throne, and in both, the grant of subsidies rests chiefly with the commons; while to the enactment of every law, the concurrence of the different branches of the legislature is essentially requisite. But, in many important points, these two forms of government totally differ. In the states-constitution, the crown is invested with more power and dignity. With more dignity, because to the crown landed estates are annexed; and the sovereign, instead of being a pensioner on the bounty of his parliaments, is the first independent proprietor:—with more power, because in the representative system, the king, with the single exception of choosing an administration, can perform no act without the sanction of his ministers. Thus, in this political system, according to the author's remark, the substantial power of royalty is vested in the hands of the ministry.

The next point of difference is that the representative system, particularly in England, rests too exclusively on the material basis of property; and that intelligence is there deprived of an adequate share in the national representation.\* In the states-constitution, where the clerical and scientific classes form a separate estate, or distinct branch of the legislature, intelligence is invested with all the dignity and glory which human society can confer. The clergy, who are the representatives of revealed faith, or the fixed and immutable part of intelligence, correspond to the aristocracy, or the representatives of fixed property—while the scientific class, representing science, or the variable or progressive part of intelligence, corresponds to the Commons, the representatives of moveable property. Hence, Francis Baader has ingeniously called

\* Those political changes which since Schlegel's death have occurred in the British constitution, while they have deprived property of much of its legitimate influence, have caused intelligence to be even less represented than heretofore in the legislature.



the clergy the Upper House of intelligence, and the scientific class the Lower House.\*

The last point of difference is that, while in many of the modern representative systems, municipal corporations are despised and rejected, they form the very keystone of the states-constitution. The revolutionists, who have had so prominent a share in the formation of these representative governments, know full well that municipal corporations form the best security of the rights of the family—the firmest ramparts of popular freedom. They are thus objects of peculiar hatred to men who, so far from wishing the commonalty to obtain stability or cohesion in their constitution, are desirous they should ever remain a loose, shifting mass of disunited atoms, ready to receive any form or impress which despotism may impose. Hence the war which, at different times and in different countries, regal or democratic tyranny has waged against these admirable institutions. In the English constitution, on the other hand, which has preserved so many elements of the old Christian monarchy, the free, municipal institutions have been carefully maintained. “The true internal strength and greatness of England (says Schlegel), consists, as is now almost universally admitted by profound political observers, far more in the vigour and freedom of municipal corporations, better preserved in that country than elsewhere, than in her admired political constitution itself.”† Defective in many parts that constitution appeared to the author, yet on the whole, he highly valued the vigorously constituted, but temperate and mitigated aristocracy of 1688. He knew that the remnants of the old Christian constitution were better there than in any of the great continental monarchies: ‡ that the British go-

\* “*Philosophische Schriften*,” vol. ii. † See “*Concordia*,” p. 66.

† According to the just remark of Burke, the states-constitution was, in latter ages, better preserved in the republics than in the monarchies of Europe.—See his “*Letters on a Regicidal Peace*.”

vernment possessed elements of stability as well as of freedom, to which those monarchies, in their existing degeneracy, could in vain pretend; and that the very peculiarities in the British constitution, to which he most strongly objected, had their origin in local circumstances, deep-rooted wants, and remote historical events. That extreme jealousy of regal power which that constitution betrays—that undue preponderance of property over intelligence—that political preponderance of the aristocracy, which, though rendered necessary by the excessive depression of royalty and of the clergy, was certainly calculated to impede the organic development of the democracy, and thereby to expose the body politic to dangerous revulsions—in fine, that fierce collision of parties, which that constitution nurses and encourages—all reveal the fearful struggles by which it came into life. The imitation of this constitution which, by bringing back to the European nations the reminiscence of their ancient freedom, has naturally excited their enthusiastic admiration—the imitation of that constitution, I say, difficult at all times, has been rendered in some countries utterly impracticable by the studious rejection of two of the great hinges on which, for a hundred and fifty years, it has turned—I mean the predominance of the aristocracy on the one hand, and the free, municipal organisation of the commonalty on the other. In many of the German states, as the author observes, the representative system works well; because the legislators have had the wisdom to connect the new with anterior institutions.

On the whole, what has been said of the Gothic architecture, may be applied to the old Christian monarchy—it was never brought to perfection. That lofty ideal of government, which Christianity had traced to the nations of the middle age—that admirable constitution, which was a partial reflection of the constitution of the church itself, and wherein were blended and united the principles of love and intelligence, stability and activity—in other words, where a paternal royalty, an enlight-

ened priesthood, a mild aristocracy, a loyal, yet free-spirited, commonalty controlled, aided, balanced, and defended each other—that lofty ideal has never been—probably never will be—fully realised. Yet there are many reasons to suppose that a momentous, and not very distant, futurity will be charged with realising, as far as human infirmity will permit, this ideal conception of the Christian state.

Such is an outline of the principal features in Schlegel's system—a system which I have endeavoured, as far as my feeble powers permitted, to explain, illustrate, and enforce.

But while in the east of Germany, this great luminary and his satellite were shedding their mild radiance of political wisdom, a star of the first magnitude rose above the western horizon of Germany, and filled the surrounding heaven with the splendour of its light. The illustrious Goerres, already celebrated for his profound researches in archæology, and many admirable political writings, published in 1819 his work, entitled “Germany and the Revolution,” which produced so extraordinary a sensation, and was at this time so ably translated by Mr. Black. This work was followed in 1821 by that writer's still more wonderful production, entitled “Europe and the Revolution,” a production which in the soundness of its doctrines—the generosity of its sentiments—the depth and comprehensiveness of its views—and the copiousness, and variety of historical illustration brought forward in their support—surpasses perhaps all the mighty works in defence of social order and liberty which the momentous events of the last fifty years have called forth in different parts of Europe. With a few slight shades of difference, the political views of Goerres mainly accord with those of Schlegel; but, living under the government of Bavaria, the former is able boldly to proclaim truths which the latter at Vienna was able only to hint. Goerres unites the strong, practical sense of Gentz—the masterly learning and profound and comprehensive understanding



of F. Schlegel—to great boldness of character, and a style of peculiar force and condensation. While the political glance of Schlegel was mostly directed towards the past—that of Gentz to the present hour—the eye of Goerres is turned more particularly to the future. Had the counsels of this illustrious man been more generally followed, the perilous crisis, in which for the last five years Germany has been involved, would have been happily averted, or at least better provided against. Himself and Schlegel may be considered as the supreme oracles of that illustrious school of liberal conservatives, founded by our great Burke, and which numbers besides the eminent Germans, whose names have already been mentioned, a Baron de Haller in Switzerland—a Viscount de Bonald in France\*—a Count Henri de Merode in Belgium—and a Count Maistre in Piedmont: men whose writings contain, in a greater or less degree, the seeds of the future political regeneration of Europe.

While engaged in the editorship of the “*Concordia*,” Schlegel gave a new edition of his works, with considerable improvements and augmentations. Actively as his time had been employed, a long period had now elapsed since he had given any great production to the world; and he was now preparing those immortal works, which were to shed so bright an effulgence round the close of his life. In the rapid review which has been here taken of his critical, philological, and historical writings, nothing has been said of his philosophical pursuits; and yet philosophy was his darling study—philosophy, which the ancients called “the science of divine and human things,” was alone capable of filling the vast capacity of Schlegel’s

\* Among these great conservatives, M. de Bonald is the only one who can be regarded as favourable to absolutism. As long as this great writer deals in general propositions, he seldom errs; but when he comes to apply his principles to practice, then the political prejudices in which he was bred, and which a too limited course of reading has failed to correct, lead him sometimes into exaggerations and errors. On the whole, he is as inferior to Burke as a publicist, as he is superior to him as a metaphysician.

mind. At the age of nineteen, he had already read all the works of Plato in their original tongue; and six-and-thirty years afterwards, he expressed a vivid recollection of the delight and enthusiasm which the perusal had excited in his youthful mind. In 1800, he commenced his philosophical career at the University of Jena, before an admiring audience; we have already seen him at Paris, amid his philological labours, devoting a portion of his time to the cultivation of philosophy; and, amid all the struggles and occupations of his subsequent life, he would ever and anon snatch some moment to pay his homage to this celestial maid—this mistress of his heart—this object of his earliest enthusiasm and latest worship.

A very distinguished friend and disciple of Schlegel's, the Baron d'Eckstein, asserts that, towards the close of the last century, a confederacy was formed among some men of the most superior minds, for the regeneration of natural science—for the revival of the lofty physics of remote antiquity, when nature was regarded only as the splendid and almost transparent veil of the spiritual world. The members of this intellectual association were Schelling, the two Schlegels, the poet Tieck, Novalis, and the celebrated geographer, Ritter. This confederacy was dissolved, when the pantheistical tendency of Schelling's philosophy became more apparent; and Frederick Schlegel, in particular, became afterwards the most strenuous and formidable opponent of a philosophic system which appeared to him, and rightly enough, only a more subtle and refined Spinosism. On the true nature of this philosophy, however, opinion was much divided; many religious men among the Protestants ranged themselves under its banners; even some of the orthodox entered into terms of accommodation with it; and the great Catholic theologian, Zimmer, thought that, by means of this system, he could obtain a clearer conception of the great Christian mystery of the Trinity. Enormous as may be the errors contained in this philosophy, yet, as few philosophic systems are entirely erroneous, the

philosophy of Schelling, which appears to have undergone a purification in its course, has been attended with some beneficial results. It has led to a more profound and spiritual knowledge of nature—it has been, to many, a point of transition from the materialism and rationalism of the eighteenth century to the Christian religion—and, indeed, this effect it has had on the illustrious founder himself, who has for some years returned to the bosom of Christianity, and who probably will be remembered by posterity more for his recent labours as a profound Christian naturalist, than for the pantheistic reveries of his youth.\*

Schlegel's earlier philosophical, as well as historical, works are no longer to be met with, and have not yet been republished. In the "Corcordia," for 1820, we find an outline of those lectures on the Philosophy of Life, which the author delivered at Vienna, in the year 1827. This work immediately preceeded the one to which this memoir is prefixed; and, as it embodies those general philosophical principles, of which in the latter an application is made

\* This view of the matter is confirmed by the high authority of the great Catholic philosopher—Molitor. Speaking of Schelling and his disciples, he says (in the words of his recent French translator): "*Quoique leurs premiers ouvrages ne respirent pas encore entièrement l'esprit pur et véritable, mais soient entachés plus ou moins de panthéisme ou de naturalisme, comme cela étoit presque nécessaire à une époque encore si profondément enfoncée dans l'incrédulité et l'orgueil, cependant leurs principes ont éveillé l'esprit religieux, et donné une base plus profonde aux vérités de cet ordre. C'est dans ce sens qu'on a retravaillé toutes les sciences, et l'on peut dire que ces hommes ont plus contribué à conduire vers la religion, que cette multitude de compendiums dogmatiques du siècle dernier.*" He then adds: "On peut se faire une idée de la direction religieuse de la physique par les écrits de Steffens, Schubert, Pfaff, et Baader. Cet esprit conduira encore à de plus grands resultats; et bientôt de nouvelles découvertes faites au ciel étoilé, sur la terre et dans son intérieur, aussi bien que dans l'organisme, affermiront et mettront dans une nouvelle lumière ces hautes vérités connues des anciens, mais que le sens stupide des modernes rejetait comme des songes et des superstitions." pp. 165-6, "Philosophie de la Tradition, traduite de l'Allemand." Paris. 1834.



to history, a rapid analysis of its doctrines, particularly in the psychological and ontological parts, will be useful, nay, almost necessary, to the elucidation of many passages in the following translation. But how can I attempt the analysis of a work where the arrangement of a formal, didactic discussion is studiously avoided—where the author pours forth his thoughts with all the freedom of conversation—high, spiritual conversation—where such is the exuberant fulness of his ideas, such the shadowy subtilty of his perceptions, that even the German language, copious and philosophical as it is, seems at times inadequate to their expression. Long as Germany had been habituated to the genius of Schlegel, she herself seems to have been startled by the appearance of a work where the boldest, the most unlooked for, the sublimest vistas of philosophy were opened to her astonished view.

Bespeaking then the indulgence of the reader, I will now proceed to lay before him an outline of some of the principal ideas on psychology and ontology, contained in the *Philosophy of Life*.

The consciousness of man is composed of mind, soul, and body. The soul is the centre of consciousness. The consciousness of man may be best understood by comparing it with that of other created beings. The existence of brutes is extremely simple—they have only a body—they have no mind—they have, properly speaking, no soul—at least, their soul is completely mingled with their corporeal frame; so that on the destruction of the latter, it reverts to the elements, or is absorbed in the general vital energy of nature (*Natur-seele*). In the scale of existence superior to man, the angelic spirits are represented in Holy Writ, and in the traditions of all nations, as pure, intellectual beings, devoid of a *gross* corporeal frame. But have they no body whatsoever? Schlegel ascribes to them what he calls in his beautiful language, “an ethereal body of light.” This opinion, it must be confessed, has comparatively few supporters in the modern schools of theology, whether in the Catholic or Protestant churches; but it was maintained

by many of the ancient fathers, and, in modern times, it has met with the high sanction of the great Leibnitz. Schlegel assigns no reason for his opinion; but I have means of knowing that another great Christian philosopher of the age has, in his unpublished system of metaphysics, adduced very cogent arguments in support of this theory. With the exception of this subtle, ethereal, luminous body, the celestial spirits, according to the author, are nothing but intelligence or mind. They have, strictly speaking, no soul; for the distinctive faculties of the soul (as will be presently shown) are reason and imagination; and these faculties cannot be ascribed to beings in whom an intuitive understanding needs not the slow deductions, and analytic process of reason; nor wants a medium of communication with the world of sense, like imagination. Hence the lines of the great German poet fully represent the difference, as well as the resemblance, in the intellectual action of man and the angelic spirits:

“ Science, O man, thou shar’st with higher spirits ;  
But Art thou hast alone.”

Hence the nature of brutes is simple—that of angels two-fold—that of men three-fold.

The third part of human consciousness, the body—its organic laws, powers, and properties, the philosopher must leave to the naturalist. It is only when it has reference to the higher parts of consciousness that its properties can be made the matter of his investigation. The soul and the mind form the fit and peculiar subject of his inquiries. To the mind belong the faculties of will and understanding—to the soul, those of reason and imagination. Schlegel observes it is remarkable that the three different species of mental alienation correspond to the three parts of human consciousness. Thus monomania springs from some error deeply rooted in the mind—frenzy is the disorder of a soul that has broken loose from all the restraints of reason; and idiocy arises from some organic

defect in the brain. The last is the effect of physical, the two former the consequence of moral, and frequently accidental, causes. The author lays it down as a general principle, subject, however, to many modifications and exceptions, that in man mind or thought predominates—in woman soul or feeling prevails. Hence in marriage, which is a sacred union of souls, the deficiencies in the psychology of either sex are happily and mutually supplied. On this subject, Schlegel has some of the most touching and beautiful reflections, which a loving heart and a noble fancy have ever inspired.

Imagination (Einbildungs-kraft) is the inventive faculty—Reason (Vernunft) the regulative—Understanding (Verstand) the penetrative, or in a higher degree the intuitive—and the Will (Wille) the moral, faculty. To these primary faculties, or, as the author styles them, these main boughs of human consciousness, four secondary faculties are subservient—the memory—the conscience—the passions or natural impulses, and the outward senses. The memory is the intermediate faculty between the understanding and the reason—the conscience the intermediate faculty between the reason and the will—the passions or natural impulses the intermediate faculty between the will and the imagination—and the outward senses form the connecting link between imagination and the body.

Reason is the regulative faculty implanted in the soul. In real life, it corresponds to what we commonly call judgment, and is that faculty by which the transactions of men are regulated, and the resolutions of the will are brought to maturity, whether in sacred or secular concerns. In science, reason is the dialectical or analytic faculty, by which the discoveries of imagination and the perceptions of the understanding receive a definite form—the faculty of analysis, arrangement, and combination. Reason in itself is not inventive—it makes no discoveries—it is rather a negative than a positive faculty—but it is the



indispensable arbitress, to whose decision understanding and imagination must submit their various productions.

Imagination, on the other hand, is the inventive faculty in art, poetry, and even science. No great discovery, says the author, can be made even in the mathematics, without imagination. This assertion may strike us as strange; but we must remember that Leibnitz declared he was led to his great mathematical discoveries by the aid of metaphysics; and that imagination necessarily enters into the composition of a great metaphysical genius, few will be disposed to question. Here, however, if I may be allowed to offer an opinion, Schlegel does not appear to me to have traced, with sufficient distinctness, the boundaries between imagination and understanding.

Understanding is the faculty of apprehension—it penetrates into the inward essence of things, and discerns the manifestations of the divine or human mind in their several revelations and communications.—Thus the naturalist, whose eye searches into the inward life of nature—the statesman, who can fathom the most deep-laid plans of a hostile policy—the theologian, who can discover the most hidden sense of Scripture, may be said to possess in an eminent degree, the faculty of understanding.

Will is the other faculty implanted in the mind of man—the faculty on whose good or evil discretion that of all the other faculties of mind and soul essentially depends. Independently of the moral direction of the will, its innate strength or weakness, its steadiness or vacillation, proportionally augment or diminish the power of all the other faculties. How far moderate abilities, when directed by a firm, tenacious, perseverant will can avail—to what a degree of success they may sometimes lead, daily experience may serve to convince us.

Originally all these faculties, will and understanding, reason and imagination, were harmoniously blended and united in the human consciousness; but since, at the fall of man, a dark spirit interposed its shadow betwixt him

and the Sun of Righteousness, disorder and confusion have entered into his mind and soul, and troubled their several faculties. Thus the understanding often points out a course which the will refuses to follow; and the will, on the other hand, is often disposed to pursue the good and right path, were the blind or narrow understanding competent to direct it. Not only are will and understanding in frequent collision with one another, but each is at variance with itself. What the will resolves to-day it shrinks from to-morrow! How often does the understanding view the same subject in a different light at different times! How much do time, circumstance, and humour, place the same truth in a clearer or obscurer aspect! The same opposition is observable betwixt reason and imagination. Where fancy is the strongest in the house, how often doth she spurn the warnings of her more homely and unpretending sister—reason. Again, where reason has the ascendancy, what groundless aversion and paltry jealousy does she not frequently evince at the superior nature of her brilliant sister! Or, to drop this figurative language, how often do we behold a man of lofty imagination very deficient in practical sense; and again, in your man of strong sense, how frequently dull and pedestrian is the fancy! In real life what a deplorable schism exists between poets and artists on the one hand, and men of business on the other! What mutual contempt and aversion do they not frequently exhibit! Well, this schism is nothing else than the external realisation of the inward conflict between reason and imagination.

With respect to the four secondary faculties—memory—conscience—the natural impulses—and the outward senses—faculties, which, as the author says, cannot from their importance be termed subordinate, but should rather be called susidiary or assigned;—Schlegel shows that, as regards the first, the decay of the memory precedes the decline of the reason, and its sudden and entire loss brings about the extinction of the latter faculty. In the same way the deadness of the conscience argues the utmost

depravity of the will. The conscience is the memory of the will, as the memory is the conscience of the understanding.

"The natural impulses," says Schlegel, "where they appear exalted to passion, are to be regarded as nothing else but the motions of a will, that has been overpowered by the false illusions of imagination. The middle position of the impulses betwixt the will and the imagination, as well as the abused co-operation of those two faculties in any passion or sensual gratification, become habitual, is apparent particularly in those inclinations which man has in common with the brute, and where the viciousness lies only in their excess or violence.\* Aspiration after infinity is natural to man, and belongs essentially to his being. Whatever is defective or disorderly in his impulses consists only in their unbounded gratification—in the perversion of that aspiration after infinity towards perishable, sensual, material, and often most unworthy objects; for that aspiration, natural as it is to man, where it is pure and genuine, can be gratified by no sensual indulgence and no earthly possession."† In the brute, the gratification of the natural appetites is regular, uniform, subject to no vicissitudes or excesses, and entails no injury on his nature, because undisturbed and unvitiated by the false illusions of imagination.

Lastly, with regard to the outward senses, there are, philosophically speaking, but three, sight, hearing, and touch—for under the last, taste and smell are included; and it is remarkable how these severally correspond to the three parts of human consciousness. The sight is pre-eminently the sense of the mind—hearing the sense of the soul—while the touch is peculiarly the sense of the body; the sense given to the body for its special protection and preservation. The loss of the first two senses the body can survive—but it perishes with the utter extinction of

\* "Philosophie der Sprache," p. 118—19.

† Ibid., p. 121.



the last. Those expressions in common parlance, a good artist-like eye—a fine musical ear—prove the close connexion which mankind has always felt to exist between the outer senses and the higher faculties of man.

“Had the soul,” says the author, “not been originally darkened and troubled—had it remained in a clear, luminous repose in its God—then the human consciousness would have been of a far more simple nature than at present; for it would have consisted only of *understanding*, *soul*, and *will*. Reason and imagination, which are now in such frequent collision with the will and understanding, as well as with each other, would then have been absorbed in those higher faculties. Even the conscience would not then have been a special act, or special function of the judgment—but a tender feeling—a gentle, almost unconscious pulsation of the soul. The senses and the memory, those ministrant faculties which, in the present dissonance of the human consciousness, form so many distinct powers of the soul, would, in its state of harmony, have been mere bodily organs.”\*

So much for the author's psychology—let us now proceed to the ontological part of the work.

To the Supreme Being, will and understanding belong in a supreme degree; in him they exist in the most perfect harmony—will is understanding, and understanding will. But with no propriety can the faculty of reason be ascribed to the Deity; and “it is remarkable,” says the author, “that nowhere in Holy Writ, nor in the sacred traditions of the primitive nations, nor in the writings of the great philosophers of antiquity, is the term reason ever used in reference to Almighty God. It is only among a few of the later, degenerate, and rationalist sects of philosophy, the Stoics for example, that the expression *Divine Reason* is ever met with. If such an expression is incorrect or unsound, with still less fitness

\* “Philosophie des Lebens,” p. 142.

and decorum can the faculty of imagination be assigned to the God-head—the very term would shock the understandings, and revolt the inmost feelings, of all men.

The Deity reveals himself unto men in four different ways—in Scripture (including of course its running and necessary commentary, ecclesiastical Tradition); — in Nature—in Conscience, and in History.

“Holy Writ,” says the author, “as it is delivered to us, and as it was begun and founded three-and-thirty centuries ago, does not exclude the elder sacred traditions of the preceding two thousand four hundred years; or the revelation, which was the common heritage of the whole human race. On the contrary, it contains very explicit allusions to the fact, that such a revelation was imparted to the first man, as well as to that patriarch who, after the destruction of the primeval world of giants, was the second progenitor of mankind. As the sacred knowledge derived from this revelation flowed on every side, and in copious streams over the succeeding generations of men, the ancient and holy traditions were soon disfigured, and covered over with fictions and fables; where, amid a multitude of remarkable vestiges and glorious traits of true religion, immoral mysteries and Bacchanalian rites were often intermixed, and truth itself, as in a second chaos, buried under a mass of contradictory symbols. Thence arose that Babylonish confusion of languages, sagas, and symbols, which is universally found among the ancient, and even the primitive nations. In the great work of the restoration of true religion, which accordingly we must regard as a second revelation, or rather as a second stage of revelation, a rigid proscription of those heathen fictions, and of all the immorality connected with them, was the first and most essential requisite. But in that gospel of creation, which forms the introduction to the whole Bible, that elder revelation, accorded to the first man and to the second progenitor, is expressly laid down as the ground-work; and in this introduction we shall find

the clue to the history and religion of the primitive world—nay, it is the true Genesis of all historical science.”\*

Now with respect to the secondary or more indirect modes, by which the Deity communicates himself to men, the author observes, that “Nature, too, is a book written on both sides, within and without, in which the finger of God is clearly visible:—a species of Holy Writ, in a bodily form—a glorious panegyric, as it were, on God’s omnipotence, expressed in the most vivid symbols. Together with these two great witnesses of the glory of the Creator, Scripture, and nature—the voice of conscience is an inward revelation of God—the first index of those other two greater and more general sources of revealed truths; while History, by laying before our eyes the march of Divine Providence—a Providence whose loving agency is apparent as well in the lives of individuals as in the social career of nations—History, I say, constitutes the fourth revelation of God.”†

We have next to consider the conduct of Divine Providence in the education of the human race. How do we educate the boy? We first endeavour to awaken his sense—then we cultivate his soul, or his moral faculties; while at the same time, we aid the gradual unfolding of his understanding. It is so with the divine education of mankind. In the primitive relation indeed, the first man received the highest intellectual illumination; an illumination, which, though at his fall it was obscured by sin, still shines with a shorn splendour through all the history and traditions of the primeval world. When, however, by the abuse he had made of his great intellectual powers, man was successively deprived of all those high gifts with which he had been originally endowed; when by the errors of idolatry he had lapsed into a state of intellectual infancy; then it was necessary that his sense should first be awakened to divine things; and this was accomplished in the Mosaic revelation. But this revelation was only

\* “*Philosophie des Lebens*,” pp. 86—7.

† *Ibid.*, p. 85.



preparatory to another, destined to renovate the soul of humanity, and gradually illumine its intelligence. This regeneration of the moral faculties of man was achieved immediately and directly by Christianity; for, without this moral regeneration, any sudden illumination of the intellect would have been hurtful rather than beneficial to mankind. Under the benign influence of Christianity, the scientific enlightenment of the human mind has been wisely progressive; but it seems reserved for the last glorious ages of the triumphant church to witness the full meridian splendour of human intelligence. Then the great scheme of creation will be fulfilled; and the intellectual light which played around the cradle will brighten the last age of humanity.

Let us now proceed to consider nature in herself, and in her relations to God, to the spiritual intelligences, and to man.

Nature was originally the beautiful, the faultless work of the Almighty's hand. But the rebel angel in his fall brought disorder and death into all material creation. Hence arose that chaos, which the breath of creative Power only could remove. Thus, according to the author, a wide interval occurs between the first and second verse of Genesis. "In the beginning," says the inspired historian, "God made heaven and earth," that is, as the Nicene Creed explains it, the visible and invisible world. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." But that void—that darkness—that chaos proceeded not from the luminous hand of an all-wise and all-perfect Maker—but from the disturbing influence of that fiend whom Holy Writ hath called, with such unfathomable depth, the "murderer from the beginning." Hence Schlegel terms him in his sublime language, "the author or original of death"—(*Erfinder des Todes*).

On a subject of such vast importance, I presume not to offer an opinion: but I must merely content myself with the humble task of analysis. It may be proper to ob-

serve, however, that this opinion of Schlegel's would seem, from a passage in the work of the great Catholic writer, Molitor, to be consonant with the tradition of the ancient synagogue. "The Cabala" says he, "was divided into two parts—the theoretical and the practical. The former was composed of the patriarchal traditions on the holy mystery of God, and the divine persons; on the spiritual creation and the fall of the angels; *on the origin of the chaos of matter, and the renovation of the world in the six days of the creation*; on the creation of man, his fall, and the divine ways conducive to his restoration."\*

"Death," says Schlegel, "came by sin into the world. As by the fall of the first man, who was not created for death, nor originally designed for death, death was transmitted to the whole human race; so by the preceding fall of him, who was the first and most glorious of all created spirits, death came into the universe, that is, the eternal death, whose fire is inextinguishable. Hence it is said: 'Darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the earth was without form, and void'—as the mere tombstone of that eternal death; but the Spirit of God moved over the waters, and therein lay the first vital germ of the new creation.'"<sup>†</sup>

But if such is the origin of nature, how is its existence perpetuated, and what will be its final destiny?

Nature, as was said above, is a book of God's revelation, written within and without. The outer part of this sacred volume attests the supreme power, wisdom, and goodness of the Creator in characters too clear and luminous to be unperceived or misread by the dullest or the most vitiated eye. The inner pages of this book comprise a still more glorious revelation of God—but their language is more mysterious, and much which they contain seems to have been wisely withheld, or rather

\* See "Philosophie de la Tradition, traduite de l'Allemand," p. 26. Paris, 1834.

† "Philosophie des Lebens," p. 126.

withdrawn from the knowledge of mankind. It was this acquaintance with the internal secrets of nature, derived partly from revelation, and partly from intuition, which gave the men of the primitive, and especially the antediluvian, world such a vast superiority over all the succeeding generations of mankind. But it was the abuse of that knowledge, also, which brought about in the primeval world a Satanic delusion, and a gigantic moral and intellectual corruption, of which we can now scarcely form the remotest idea. But this key to the inward science of nature, which was taken away from a corrupt world, that had so grossly abused it, seems now about to be restored to man, renovated as his soul and intelligence have been by a long Christian education. The physical researches of the last fifty years, especially in Germany, lead the inquirer more and more to the knowledge of this important truth, stamped on all the pages of ancient tradition, and never effaced from the recollection of mankind, to wit, the action of spiritual intelligences on the material world. The nature of this action is briefly adverted to in the following passage (among many others to the same purport), in the "Philosophy of Life." "It is especially of importance," says the author, "for the understanding of the general system of nature, to observe how the modern chemistry mostly dissolves and decomposes all solid bodies, as well as water itself, into different forms of elements of air, and thereby has taken away from nature the appearance of rigidity and petrification. There are everywhere living elemental powers hidden and shut up under this appearance of rigidity. The quantity of water in the air is so great that it would suffice for more than one deluge; a similar inundation of light would occur, if all the light latent in darkness were at once set free; and all things would be consumed by fire, if that element, in the quantity in which it exists, were suddenly let loose. The salutary bonds, by which these elemental powers are held in due equilibrium, one bound by the other, and kept within its prescribed limits, I will



not now make a matter of investigation ; nor now examine the question, whether *these bonds be not perhaps of a higher kind than naturalists commonly suppose.*"

The great apostle of the Gentiles represents all nature as sighing for her deliverance from the bondage of death. "Every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even now." Some chapters in the "Philosophy of Life" may be considered as one luminous commentary on that text. My limits will permit me to cite but one passage.

"That planetary world of sense, and the soul of the earth imprisoned therein, is only apparently dead. Nature only sleeps, and may again be awakened : and sleep is, if not the essence, yet a characteristic mark of nature. Every thing in nature hath this quality of sleep ; not the animals merely, but the plants also sleep ; and in the course of the seasons on the surface of the globe, there is a constant alternation between waking and slumber." . . . "That soul," he continues, "which slumbers under the prodigious tombstone of outward nature—a soul, which is not alien, but half akin to us—is divided between the troubled, painful reminiscence of eternal death, in which it originated, and the bright flowers of celestial hope, which grow on the borders of that dark abyss. For this earthly nature, as Holy Writ saith, is indeed subjected to nothingness—yet without its will, and without its fault : so it looks forward in expectation of Him who hath so subjected it—it looks forward in the hope that it may one day be free—one day have a share in the general resurrection and consummate revelation of God's glory ; and for this last great day of future creation nature anxiously sighs, and yearns from her inmost soul."\*

I will now wind up this analysis with the following passage, in which the distinctive peculiarities of the different parts of ontology are shortly stated : "The distinctive characteristic of nature is sleep, or the struggle between life and death ; the distinctive characteristic of man is imagination (for reason is a more negative faculty) ;

\* "Philosophie des Lebens," p. 129.

the distinctive characteristic of the intelligences superior to man is restless, eternal activity, implanted in the very constitution of their being; and the distinctive characteristic of the Deity, in relation to his creatures, is infinite condescension."

Such is a brief summary of some of the principal observations in the psychological and ontological parts of the "Philosophy of Life." And in this summary it has been my intention not so much to give an analysis of those parts, as to convey to the reader a clue for the better understanding of many passages in the work I have translated. The remaining parts of the "Philosophy of Life" are devoted to a variety of ethical, political, and æsthetic reflections, which it is unnecessary to enter into here.

Scarce had Germany recovered from the enthusiasm which this work (the "Philosophy of Life") excited; when its illustrious author delivered, in the year 1828, the following course of lectures on the "Philosophy of History," which are now presented to the reader in an English garb. Defective as may be the medium through which the English reader becomes acquainted with this work, he will be enabled to form on it a more impartial, as well as more enlightened, judgment than any the translator could pronounce; and he will, therefore, only venture to observe that it has been considered in every respect worthy of its author's high reputation.

Towards the close of the year 1828, Schlegel repaired to Dresden; and in that city, where the torch of his early enthusiasm had been first kindled, was now to witness its final extinction. He delivered in this city, before a numerous and distinguished auditory, nine lectures on the "Philosophy of Language" (*Philosophie der Sprache*), wherein he developed and expanded those philosophical views already laid down in his "Philosophy of Life." This work is even more metaphysical than the one last named—with untiring wing, the author here sustains his flight through the sublimest regions of philosophy. This production displays at times a gigantic vastness of

conception which almost appals—we might almost say, that this mighty intelligence had in his ardent aspirations after immortality, burst his earthly fetters—or that Divine Providence, judging a degenerate world unworthy of hearing such sublime accents, had called him to continue his hymn in eternity. On Sunday, the 11th of January, 1829, he was, between ten and eleven o'clock at night, preparing a lecture, which he was to deliver on the following Wednesday. He had in his former lectures spoken of time and eternity—he had called time a distraction of eternity—he had adverted to those ecstasies of great saints, which he called transitions to eternity. He was now in this lecture discoursing of the different degrees of knowledge attainable by man—of the perception—the notion—and the idea. He began a sentence with these remarkable words:—"Das ganz vollendete und vollkommene verstehen selbst aber."—"But the consummate and the perfect knowledge"—when the hand of sickness arrested his pen. That consummate and perfect knowledge he himself was now destined to attain in another and a better world; for at one o'clock on the same night, he breathed out his pure and harmonious soul to heaven.

His death, though sudden, was not unprovided. He had ever lived up to his faith—through his writings there runs an under-current of calm, unostentatious piety; and I know no writer more deeply impressed with a sense of the loving agency of Providence. A gentleman, well acquainted with some of his most intimate friends, has assured me that, for some time prior to his death, he had prosecuted his devotional exercises with more than ordinary fervour; and that on the morning of that Sunday on which his last illness seized him, he had been united to his Lord in the Holy Communion—a presage and an earnest, let us hope, of that intimate union he was destined to enjoy in the long and cloudless day of eternity!

The melancholy news of his death, when conveyed to his distinguished friend—Adam Müller, then at Vienna, gave such a violent shock to his feelings, that it brought on a



stroke of apoplexy, which terminated his existence. A chain of the most exalted sympathies had united those souls in life—what marvel if the electric stroke, which prostrated the one should have laid low the other!

Frederick Schlegel married early in life the daughter of the celebrated Jewish philosopher Mendelsohn. This lady followed her husband in his change of religion. Mrs. Schlegel is one of the most intellectual women in Germany—she is advantageously known to the literary world by her German translation of Madame de Stael's "Corinne;" and report has ascribed to her elegant pen several of the poems in her husband's collection.\*

In conclusion, I will endeavour to recapitulate the obligations which literature and science owe to the great man, whose literary biography I have attempted to sketch.

To have, in common with his illustrious brother, established a system of broad, comprehensive, synthetic criticism, by which the principles of ancient and modern art were unfolded to view—by which we were introduced into the intellectual laboratories of genius, made to assist at the birth of her mighty conceptions, and by whose plastic touch the great works of ancient and modern poetry were in a manner created anew :—to have unlocked the fountains of the old Germanic minstrelsy, and refreshed the poetry of his age with a new stream of fictions :—to have been among the first to do for philology what the Stagyrte had done for natural history; by classifying languages not according to their outward form, but their internal organisation, not according to a specious, though often delusive, etymology, but according to grammatical structure : to have deciphered the mysterious wisdom of old days, and with admirable tact to have caught the spirit of the primitive world, as disclosed in its sagas and its symbols, its poetry and its philosophy : next to have evoked from the dust the better philosophy of ancient Greece, and presented her venerable form to the renewed

\* A complete edition of Frederick Schlegel's works, in fifteen volumes 8vo., is now publishing at Vienna.

love and respect of mankind, partly by an admirable translation of portions of Plato, partly by luminous critiques, and partly again by the example of his own philosophy, in form as well as spirit so eminently Platonic: then, in the field of modern history, to have traced the rise and progress of the European states, the genius of their civil and political institutions, the causes and effects of their moral and social revolutions, with an extent of learning, a spirit of impartiality, and a depth and comprehensiveness of understanding, unsurpassed by preceding writers, and in his own age rivalled only by his illustrious countryman—Goerres: lastly, to have put the crowning glory to a life so full of glorious achievement by his last philosophical works, where a strong and broad light is thrown upon the mysteries of psychology, where the most important questions of ontology are treated with equal boldness and sublimity of thought, and magnificence of fancy, while even on physics many bright hints are thrown out, which a deeper science will know one day how to turn to account: such are the services which this illustrious man has rendered to the cause of literature and philosophy. Living in an age which is only an epoch of momentous transition from the adolescence to the virility of the human mind, he was evidently, together with some other chosen spirits of his time, the precursor of an era of Christian philosophy, when, to use the language of a young, but very distinguished French writer (the Abbé Gerbet), “the sterile dust of futile abstractions will be swept away, and the antique faith will appear crowned with all the rays of science.” “Already,” continues the writer just quoted, “even infidel science, astonished at her own discoveries, which disconcert alike ideology and materialism, begins to suspect

“ There are more things in heaven and earth  
Than are dreamt of in that philosophy.”



# PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

## LECTURE I.

### INTRODUCTION.

“And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; but the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” GEN., i. 2.

By philosophy of history must not be understood a series of remarks or ideas upon history, formed according to any concerted system, or train of arbitrary hypotheses attached to facts. History cannot be separated from facts, and depends entirely on reality; and thus the Philosophy of history, as it is the spirit or idea of history, must be deduced from real historical events, from the faithful record and lively narration of facts—it must be the pure emanation of the great whole—the one connected whole of history, and for the right understanding of this connexion a clear arrangement is an essential condition and an important aid. For although this great edifice of universal history, where the conclusion at least is still wanting, is in this respect incomplete, and appears but a mighty fragment of which even particular parts are less known to us than others; yet is this edifice sufficiently advanced, and many of its great wings and members are sufficiently unfolded to our view, to enable us, by a lucid arrangement of the different periods of history, to gain a clear insight into the general plan of the whole.

It is thus my intention to render as intelligible as I possibly can, the general results and the connexion of all the past transactions in the history of the human race; to form a true judgment on the particular portions or sections of history, accord-



ing to their intrinsic nature and real value in reference to the general progress of mankind, carefully distinguishing what was injurious, what advantageous, and what indifferent; and thereby, as far as is possible to the limited perceptions of man, to comprehend in some degree that mighty whole. This perception—this comprehension—this right discernment of the great events and general results of universal history, is what might be termed a science of history; and I would have here preferred that term, were it not liable to much misconception, and might have been understood as referring more to special and learned inquiries, than the other name I have adopted to denote the nature of the present work.

If we would seize and comprehend the general outline of history, we must keep our eye steadily upon it; and must not suffer our attention to be confused by details, or drawn off by the objects immediately surrounding us. Judging from the feelings of the present, nothing so nearly concerns our interests as the matter of peace or war; and this is natural, as, in a practical point of view they are both affairs of the highest moment; while the courageous and successful conduct of the one insures the highest degree of glory, and the solid establishment and lasting maintenance of the other, may be considered as the greatest problem of political art and human wisdom. But it is otherwise in universal history, when this is conceived in a comprehensive and enlarged spirit. Then the remotest Past, the highest antiquity, is as much entitled to our attention as the passing events of the day, or the nearest concerns of our own time.

When a war, indeed, carried on more than two thousand years ago, in which the belligerent parties have long ceased to exist, when every thing has been since changed—when a long series of historical catastrophes has intervened between that period and our own; when such a warfare, offering as it does but at best a remote analogy to the circumstances of nearer times, and consequently possessing no immediate interest, has been investigated by the mighty intellect of a Thucydides, portrayed by him in the highest style of eloquence, and unfolded to our view with the most consummate knowledge of mankind, of public life, and of the most intimate relations of Government; such a warfare then retains a permanent interest, and is a lasting source of instruction. We love to dive into

the minutest details of an event so widely removed from us—and such a study is to be regarded and prized as highly useful, were it only as an exercise of historical reflection, and a school of political science. This remark will equally hold good, when the internal feuds of a less powerful state have been analysed and laid open by the acute perspicacity and delicate discrimination of a Machiavelli. And still more, perhaps, when a great system of pacification, like that which Augustus gave, or promised to give to the whole civilised world, and established for a certain period at least, has been fathomed by the searching eye of a Tacitus, and by his masterly hand delineated in its ulterior progress and remote effects; showing, as he does, how that surface, apparently so calm, concealed numberless sources of disquiet—an abyss of crime and destruction—how that evil principle in the degenerate government of Rome became more and more apparent, and under a succession of wicked rulers, broke out into paroxysms more and more fearful.

As a school of political science and historical reflection, the study of these and similar classical historical works is of inestimable advantage. But independently of this, and considered merely in themselves, all those countless battles—those endless, and even, for the greater part, useless wars, of which the long succession fills up for so many thousand years the annals of all nations, are but little atoms compared with the great whole of human destiny. The same, with a slight distinction, will hold good of so many celebrated treaties of peace in past ages, when these have lost all interest for real life and the present order of things;—treaties, which though brought about by great labour, and upheld by consummate art, were yet internally defective, and sooner or later, and often quickly enough, fell to pieces and were destroyed.

From all these descriptions of ancient wars, and treaties of peace, no longer applicable or of interest to the present world, or present order of things, historical philosophy can deduce but one, though by no means unimportant, result. It is this—that the internal discord, innate in man and in the human race, may easily and at every moment, break out into real and open strife—nay, that peace itself—that immutable object of high political art, when regarded from this point of view, appears to be nothing else than a war retarded or kept under by human dexte-

rity; for some secret disposition—some diseased political matter, is almost ever at hand to call it into existence. In the same way as a scientific physician regards the health of the body, or its right temperature, as a happy equipoise—a middle line not easy to be observed between two contending evils—we must ever expect in such an organic imperfection a tendency to, or the seeds of, disease in one shape or another.

Political events form but one part, and not the whole, of human history. A knowledge of details, however great and various it may be, constitutes no science in the philosophic sense of the word, for it is in the right and comprehensive conception of the whole that science consists.

As the greater part of the nine hundred millions of men on the whole surface of the earth, according to the highest estimate of a hazardous calculation, are born, live, and die, without a history of them being possible, or without their reckoning a fraction in the general history—so that the extremely small number of those called historical men, forms but a rare exception—so there are nations and countries, which in a general comparative survey of nations, serve but as a mark or evidence of some particular stage of civilisation, without of themselves holding any place in the general history of our species, or conducing to the social progress of mankind, or possessing any weight or importance in the scale of humanity.

There is a point of view, indeed, from which the matter appears under a different aspect, and is really different. To the all-seeing eye of Providence, every human life, however brief its duration, however apparently insignificant, presents a point of internal development and crisis, consequently a species of history, cognisable and visible to that Eye only, and, therefore, not entirely without an object. But this point of view belongs to another order of things, and is no longer historical—it has reference to the immortal destinies of the human soul, and the connexion of the present life with another world invisible to us. But our historical science is limited to the department of man's present existence; and in our historical inquiries we must not lose sight of this principle.

But the internal development of mind, so far as it is historical, belongs as much as the external events of politics to the department of human history, and must by no means be excluded from it. Among these rare exceptions of historical men



must be named that ancient master of human acuteness, who was the teacher of Alexander the Great, and who perhaps holds not an humbler or less important place in this exalted sphere than the conqueror himself, although this philosopher, whose genius embraced nature, the world, and life, was by his own contemporaries less honoured and celebrated than by a remote posterity. Here in our western world, and long after the kingdoms founded by the Macedonian conqueror had disappeared, and were forgotten, Aristotle for many centuries reigned the absolute lord of the Christian schools, and directed the march of human science and human speculation in the middle age. Whether he were always rightly understood and studied in the right way is another question, for here we are speaking of his overruling influence and historical importance. Nay, in later times, he has materially served the cause of the better natural philosophy founded on experience, in which he himself accomplished things so extraordinary for his age, and was originally, and for a long while, the guide and master.

The first fundamental rule of historical science and research, when by these is sought a knowledge of the general destinies of mankind, is to keep these, and every object connected with them, steadily in view, without losing ourselves in the details of special inquiries and particular facts, for the multitude and variety of these subjects is absolutely boundless; and on the ocean of historical science the main subject easily vanishes from the eye. In history, as in every branch of mental culture, the first elementary school-instruction is not merely an important, but an essential, condition to a higher and more scientific knowledge. At first, indeed, it is merely a nomenclature of celebrated personages and events—a sketch of the great historical eras, divided according to chronological dates, or a geographical plan—which must be impressed on the memory, and which serves as a basis preparatory to that more vivid and comprehensive knowledge to be obtained in riper years. Thus this first knowledge stored up in the memory, and necessary for methodising and arranging the mass of historical learning to be afterwards acquired, is more a preparation for the study of history, than the real science of history itself. In the higher grades of academic instruction, the lessons on history must vary with each one's calling and pursuits—one course of historical reading is necessary for the theologian, another for the lawyer

or civilian. To the physician, and in general to the naturalist, natural history, and what in the history of man is most akin to that science, will ever be the most captivating. And the philologist will find a boundless field for inquiry in special antiquarian researches, particularly now when, in addition to classical learning and the more common Oriental tongues, the languages and historical antiquities of the remoter nations of Asia have attracted the attention of European scholars, and the original sources are becoming every day more accessible.

Even the sphere of modern political history, from which for the practical business of government so much is to be learned, will be found equally extensive—when, besides the modern classical works, we look to the countless multitude of private memoirs and other historical and political writings; especially at a time, and in a world where even periodical publications and newspapers have become a power and an art or a science, and society itself falls more and more under the sway of journalism. If in this department of politics and statistics, we add also the number of unprinted documents, we shall find that the archives of many a state would alone furnish occupation for more than a man's life.

In all such special departments of historical science, the great whole of history is made subordinate to some secondary object; and this cannot be otherwise. It may even be advantageous for the profounder knowledge and more skilful exposition of universal history that we should seriously investigate some particular branch of history; and, in a science so various, select some special subject for more minute inquiry; but this can never be done without some decided predilection—some almost party bias towards the subject. Yet such special inquiries are only preparatory or auxiliary to the general science or philosophy of history—but not that science itself. Thus at the outset of my literary career, I devoted a considerable time to a very minute study of the Greeks\*—and subsequently I applied myself to the Hindoo language and philosophy, at that time more difficult of access than at the present day.† In the struggles of life, and amid the public dangers of our times, I was alive to

\* Schlegel's first great work was entitled "The Greeks and the Romans," published in the year 1797.

† The result of our author's researches on Hindoo literature and philosophy was evinced in his work entitled, "The Language and Wisdom of the Indians," published in 1808.

a patriotic feeling for the history of my own country, and recent times ; and, perhaps, there are some among my present hearers who remember the historical lectures I delivered in this spirit eighteen years ago in this imperial city.\* It is now my wish, and the object I propose to myself, to discard all antiquarian, Oriental, or European predilections for particular branches of history, and to unfold to view, and render completely clear and intelligible, the great edifice of universal history in all its parts, members, and degrees. The first fundamental rule here laid down, with respect to the mode of treating general history—namely, to keep the attention fixed on the main subject, and not to let it be distracted or dissipated by a number of minute details—concerned more the method of historical science. The second rule regards the subject and purport of history, and stands in more immediate connexion with the first portion of this work—that relating to primitive history. This second fundamental rule of historical science may be thus simply expressed :—we should not wish to explain every thing. Historical tradition must never be abandoned in the philosophy of history—otherwise we lose all firm ground and footing. But historical tradition, ever so accurately conceived and carefully sifted, doth not always, especially in the early and primitive ages, bring with it a full and demonstrative certainty. In such cases, we have nothing to do but to record, as it is given, the best and safest testimony which tradition, so far as we have it, can afford; supposing even that some things in that testimony appear strange, obscure, and even enigmatical; and perhaps a comparison with some other part of historical science—or, if I may so speak, stream of tradition, will unexpectedly lead to the solution of the difficulty. Extremely hazardous is the desire to explain every thing, and to supply whatever appears a gap in history—for in this propensity lies the first cause and germ of all those violent and arbitrary hypotheses which perplex and pervert the science of history far more than the open avowal of our ignorance, or the uncertainty of our knowledge : hypotheses which give an oblique direction, or an exaggerated and false extension to a view of the subject originally not incorrect. And even if there are points which appear not very clear to us, or which we leave unexplained—this will not prevent us from com-

\* Schlegel alludes to "The Lectures on Modern History," which he delivered at Vienna in the year 1810.



prehending, so far at least as the limited conception of man is able, the great outline of human history, though here and there a gap should remain.

This matter will be best explained by an example that will bring us at once to the subject we propose to treat. Let us imagine some bold navigators (and what we here suppose by way of example has more than once actually occurred) touching at some island inhabited by wild savages in the midst of the great ocean between America and Eastern Asia. This island lies, we suppose, at a very great distance from either continent, and the same will hold good of it, though there be a group of islands. These savages have but miserable fishing-boats made of hollow trunks of trees, by which it is not easy to conceive how they could have been transported so far. The question now naturally occurs, how has this race of men come hither?—

A pagan natural philosophy, which even now dares often enough to raise its voice, would be very ready with its answer: "There," it would say, "you see plainly how every thing has sprung from the pap of the earth—the primitive slime—there is no need of the far-fetched idea of an imaginary Creator—these self-existing men of the earth—these well-known autocthones of the ancients—these true sons of nature—have risen up or crawled out of the fruitful slime of the earth."

A deeper physiological science would, independently of every other consideration, and looking merely to the natural organisation of man, scout this wild chaotic hypothesis respecting his origin from slime. For this organic frame of the human body, which has become a body of death, is still endowed with many and wonderful powers, and still encloses the hidden light of its celestial origin.—Without, however, entering further into this inquiry, which falls not within the limits here prescribed, let us rather tacitly believe that although as the ancient history saith, man was formed out of the slime of the earth; yet it was by the same Hand which invisibly conducts each individual through life, and has more than once rescued all mankind from the brink of the abyss, that his marvellous body was framed, into which the Maker himself breathed the immortal spirit of life. This divine in-dwelling spark in man, the heathens themselves, notwithstanding the opinion about the autocthones, recognised in the beautiful tradition or fiction of

Prometheus; and many of their first spirits, philosophers, orators, and poets, and grave and moral teachers, have in one form or another, and under a variety of figurative expressions, borne frequent, and loud, and repeated testimony to the truth of a higher spirit, a divine flame, animating the breast of man. This universal faith in the heavenly Promethean light—or as we should rather say, this spark of our bosoms—is the only thing we must here pre-suppose, and from which all our historical deductions must be taken. With the opposite doctrine—with the absolute unbelief in all which constitutes man really man—no history, and no science of history, is possible; and this is the only remark we shall here oppose to an infidelity that denies the existence of every thing high and godly. For the question respecting the creation of man, or as atheism terms it, the first springing up of the human race, is beyond the limits of history, and must be left to the decision of revelation and faith; for the question can be reached by no history, no science of history—no historical research. History begins, as this will be presently shown, with man's second step; which immediately follows his concealed origin antecedent to all history.

To recur now to the example already given of an island situated in the middle of the ocean, with its savage inhabitants and their miserable fishing-boats—the real solution, as experience has really proved, of this apparent difficulty is, on a nearer acquaintance with the subject, easily found. If, for example, the language and traditions of this rude, savage, or at least degraded, tribe, are minutely studied and investigated, then so striking a resemblance and affinity will be found with the languages and traditions of the races in either of the remotely situated continents, that the most sceptical mind will hardly entertain a doubt respecting the common origin of both; for this community in language and traditions is too strong, too strikingly evident, to be ascribed with any degree of probability to the sport of accident. This truth now once firmly established (for a community of language, tradition, and race among all the nations of the earth is a truth almost unanimously received and acknowledged by those historical inquirers most versed in nature, and most learned in philology of the present age), it becomes a mere matter of indifference, or one at least of minor importance, how and in what way this

originally savage, or at least barbarised tribe first arrived hither; and it were a mere waste of labour to select, among the hundred conceivable or inconceivable accidents and possibilities which may have occasioned or led to this arrival, any particular one as the best explanation, and to found thereon some ingenious hypothesis, how the land on both sides may have been differently situated, before a closer connexion with this little island was broken off by the destructive floods; or in which of the last great catastrophes of the earth that disjunction may have taken place. We may leave such conjectures to themselves, and, satisfied with the main result, proceed further in the historical investigation and survey of the earth. For, in truth, the earth's surface more narrowly and carefully examined, furnishes, in reference to man and his primitive history, far other and weightier problems than those involved in the example first selected.

It is generally known that in a great many places situated in various parts of the earth, in the interior of mountains and even on plains, sometimes near the surface, and sometimes at a greater or less depth in the interior of mountainous chains rising to a very great elevation above the level of the sea, there are found whole strata of scattered bones belonging to animal species either actually existing, or which formerly existed and are now totally extinct—the chaotic remains of an all-destroying inundation that immediately remind us of the general tradition respecting the great Flood. In other places again, extensive layers of coral, sea-shells, marine plants, and other products of the sea, imbedded in the firm soil, prove these tracts of land to have been an ancient bottom of the sea. According to all appearance, these are not only monuments of one great natural revolution, but these elemental gigantic sepulchres of the primitive world offer to the mind many and various problems which more nearly, indeed, regard the earth, but as that planet is the habitation of man, have in consequence an indirect, but proximate, reference to mankind and their earliest history. A single example will best serve to point out among so many things, which are no longer perhaps susceptible of explanation, that which is of most moment to the historian; as well as the limits within which he should keep.

Not long back, about nine years ago, a cave was discovered



in the county of Yorkshire, in England, filled for the most part with the bones and skeletons of hyænas, of the same species now found in the southernmost point of Africa—the Cape of Good Hope. These bones were intermixed with those of tigers, bears, wolves, as also of elephants, rhinosceri, and other animals, among which were found the remains of the old large deer, that is not now to be met with in England. The profound naturalist, Schubert, whom, in subjects of this kind, I willingly take for my guide, observes in his natural history with respect to this newly-discovered cavern (which evidently belongs to another, long extinct, and anterior world of nature), that the opinion which would make a whole stratum of bones to have been swept thither by floods in so sound a state, and from so remote a distance, is perfectly inadmissible. He shows it to be much more probable that this cave was the den of a troop of hyænas, which had dragged thither the bones of the other animals; for this fell and rapacious animal feeds by preference on bones, which it knows how to break, as it is in the habit of raking up dead bodies. What an immense interval separates that now highly civilised state—those flourishing provinces—that country abounding, and almost overteeming with all the fruits of human industry, with all the productions of mechanic skill;—that cultivated garden, that Island-Queen, the mistress of every sea;—what an immense interval separates her from those savage times, when troops of hyænas prowled about the land, together with the other gigantic animals of the southern zone and tropic clime!

Thus is it natural to suppose that in one of the last great revolutions of nature the climate of the earth has undergone a total change; and that originally the now icy north enjoyed a glowing warmth, a rich fertility, and all the fulness of luxuriant life. A number of still more decisive facts declare for this supposition, or, to speak more properly, this certainty; since we discover in the upper parts of Northern Asia, and in general throughout the Polar regions, entire forests of palm in the subterraneous strata, as also well preserved remains of whole herds of elephants, and of many other kindred species of animals now totally extinct. Long before most of these facts were discovered, Leibnitz had conjectured that originally the earth in general, even in the north, enjoyed a much warmer temperature than in the present period of all-ruling and pro-

gressive frost ; and Buffon and others have established on this idea the hypothesis of a vast central fire in the interior of the earth. The interior parts of the earth and its internal depths are a region totally impervious to the eye of mortal man, and can least of all be approached by those ordinary paths of hypothesis adopted by naturalists and geologists. The region designed for the existence of man, and of every other creature endowed with organic life, as well as the sphere open to the perception of man's senses, is confined to a limited space between the upper and lower parts of the earth, exceedingly small in proportion to the diameter, or even semi-diameter, of the earth, and forming only the exterior surface, or outer skins, of the great body of the earth. Even at a very slight depth below the earth's surface, all change of seasons ceases and an even temperature eternally prevails, approximating rather to cold than living heat. Yet on this side the earth is more easy of access than in the upper regions, where not only the higher Alps and glaciers are the last attainable limit to human daring, but even the pure ether of the supernal atmosphere made an aeronaut, celebrated for his disaster, learn at his own cost, how very near is that boundary where, in deadening cold, all life and all observation cease. It is in the physical, as in the moral world—where light and heat should exist, there two things are necessary—a power to give light and communicate heat, and a substance capable of receiving and absorbing the one and the other. Where either condition is wanting, there reigns eternal darkness, and deadly and eternal cold ; and so the fact, that the whole action of heat, and of all the life it produces, is confined entirely to this lower atmosphere, should awake attention rather than create surprise. In all matters, even of this sort, we cannot be too mindful of the necessity of confining our researches to that small, narrowly circumscribed sphere inhabited by man, and of never exceeding those limits.

Thus to explain the fact that the habitable earth has not, as originally, so warm a temperature as the north, we need not have recourse to any supposition of a central fire suddenly extinguished, like an oven that becomes cold, or to any other violent hypothesis of the same kind ; for this fact may be sufficiently accounted for by the last great revolution of nature—the general deluge, which, as may be assumed with great probability, produced a change in the heretofore much purer, balmier,

and more genial atmosphere. That towards the equator, the position of the earth's axis has undergone a change, and that thereby this great revolution in the earth's climate was occasioned, is indeed a bare possibility ; but until further proof, this must be regarded as a purely gratuitous hypothesis. But without subscribing to these fanciful suppositions, and mathematical theories, and without wishing to penetrate, with some geologists, into the hidden depths of the earth in quest of an imagined central fire, we shall find on the inhabited surface of the globe, or very near it, many proofs and indications of the once superior energy of the principle of fire—a principle whereof volcanoes, whether subsisting or extinct, and the kindred phenomena of earthquakes, may be considered the last feeble surviving effects ; for not basalt only, but porphyry, granite, and in general all the primary rocks, and those which, according to the classification of geologists, are more immediately akin to them, can be proved to be of a volcanic nature with as much certainty, as we can trace, in the horizontal secondary formations, the destructive influence and operation of the element of water. Hence this layer of subterraneous, though now in general slumbering fire, with all its volcanic arteries and veins of earthquakes, may once have been as widely diffused over the surface of the globe, as the element of water, now occupying so large a portion of that surface. As volcanic rocks exist in the ocean, or rather at its bottom, and as their irruptions burst through the body of waters up to the surface of the sea ; as their volcanic agency gives birth to earthquakes, and not unfrequently raises, and heaves up new islands from the depths of the ocean ; naturalists have concluded, with reason for these various facts, that the volcanic basis of the earth's surface, though tolerably near, must still be somewhat deeper than the bottom of the sea. And without stopping to examine the hypothesis relative to the immeasurable depth of the ocean, the opinion which fixes the earth's basis at about 30,000 feet, or one geographical mile and a half below the level of the sea, does not exceed the modest limits of a well-considered probability. In the present period of the globe, water is the predominant element on the earth's surface. But if that volcanic power which lies deeper in the bosom of the earth and the kindred principle of fire, had at an early epoch of nature,



the same influence and operation on the earth, as water afterwards had, we can well imagine such an influence to have materially affected the lower atmosphere, and to have rendered the climate of the earth, even at the north, totally different from what it is at present.

The strata of bones formed by the old flood, and the buried remains of a former race of animals, call forth a remark, which is not without importance in respect to the primitive history of man;—it is, that among the many bones of other large and small land animals, which form of themselves a rich and varied collection of the subterraneous products of nature, the fossil remains of man are scarcely anywhere to be found. It has sometimes happened that what were at first considered the bones of human giants, have been afterwards proved to have been those of animals. It is so very rare an instance to meet in fossil remains with a real human bone, skull, jaw-bone, or entire human skeleton (as in one particular instance was found enclosed in a lime-stone, mixed with some few utensils and instruments of the primitive world, such as a stone-knife, a copper axe, an iron club, and a dagger of a very ancient form, together with some human bones); that the very rareness of the exception serves only to confirm the general rule. Were we from this fact immediately to draw the conclusion that during all those revolutions of nature, mankind had not yet existence, such an hypothesis would be rash, groundless, completely at variance with history—one to which many even physical objections, too long to detail here, might be opposed. That so very few, and indeed scarcely any human bones are to be found among the fossil remains of the primitive world, may possibly be owing to the circumstance that by the very artificial, hot, and highly-seasoned food of men, their bones, from their chemical nature and qualities, are more liable to destruction than those of other animals. I may here repeat what I have already had occasion to remark, and what is here of especial importance, as applying particularly to the history and circumstances of the primitive world;—namely, that all things are not susceptible of an entire, satisfactory, and absolutely certain explanation; and that yet we may form a tolerably correct conception of general facts; though many of the particulars may remain for a time unexplained, or at least not

capable of a full explanation. So, on the other hand, it would be premature, and little conformable to the grave circumspection of the historian, to reduce all those natural catastrophes (the vouching monuments and mysterious inscriptions of which are now daily disclosed to the eye of Science as she explores the deep sepulchres of the earth)—to reduce, I say, all those natural catastrophes exclusively to the one nearest to the historical times, and which, indeed, is attested by the clear, unanimous tradition of all, or at least of most ancient nations; for several mighty and violent revolutions of nature, of various kinds, though of a less general extent, may possibly have happened, and very probably did really happen simultaneously with, or subsequently, or even previously, to the last general flood.

The irruption of the Black Sea into the Thracian Bosphorus is regarded by very competent judges in such matters, as an event perfectly historical, or at least, from its proximity to the historical times, as not comparatively of so primitive a date. A celebrated northern naturalist has shown it to be extremely probable that the Caspian Sea, and the Lake Aral, were originally united with the Euxine, and that on the other hand, the North Sea extended very far over land, and even near to those regions, leaving some marine plants very different from those of the Southern Seas. The sea originally must have stretched much further over the earth and even over many places where now is dry land, as may easily be inferred from the great and extensive salt-steppes in Asia, Africa, and some parts of Eastern Europe, which furnish many and irrefragable proofs that the land was once occupied by the sea.

All these great physical changes are not necessarily and exclusively to be ascribed to the last general deluge. The presumed irruption of the Mediterranean into the ocean, as well as many other mere partial revolutions in the earth and sea, may have occurred much later, and quite apart from this great event. The original magnificence of the climate of the north, as displayed in the luxuriant richness of all organic productions, is commemorated in many traditions of the primitive nations, especially those of Southern Asia; and in these Sagas, the north is ever made the subject of uncommon eulogy. That the north enjoys a certain natural pre-eminence

appears to be matter of certainty; and to be even susceptible of scientific demonstration. The northern and southern extremities of our planet appear at least to be very unlike, if we judge the terraqueous globe according to the present state of geographical knowledge. While the old and new continents, the north of Asia and of America, extend in long and wide tracts of land high up towards the North Pole, so that the boundaries of land cannot be everywhere perfectly defined; water is the predominant element around the colder South Pole, to which even the southernmost point of America, and the remotest island of Polynesia—the extreme verge of land—make no near approach; and beyond these points, so far as the boldest navigators have been able to penetrate, they have discovered only sea and ice, and nowhere a real Polar region of any great extent. Thus the South Pole is the cold and watery side, or as we should say in dynamics, the negative and weaker end of the earth's body, while the North Pole on the other hand appears to be the positive and stronger extremity; for, though the centre of the earth's magnetic attraction and magnetic life, accords not mathematically with the northern point, yet it lies at no very great distance from it. In other phenomena of nature, too, the real seat and principle of life will be found, not at the mathematical point, but a little removed from it.

Another circumstance worthy of consideration is, that the northern firmament possesses by far the largest and most brilliant constellations, and that though the southern firmament is embellished by its own, they are neither in the same number, nor of the same beauty. To the impressions made by such objects, the men of the primitive ages were certainly far more alive than those of the present day; and an obscure feeling for nature, grounded on the real natural superiority of the north, as well as the poetical Sagas which were in part the natural offspring of such feelings, may have contributed to direct the stream of the first migrations of nations towards the north, and have occasioned the very early colonisation and settlement of its regions: for, in primitive antiquity, a certain presentient instinct, it is right to suppose, was much oftener the primary cause of those migrations than such a spirit of commercial speculation as afterwards animated the



Phœnicians and their various colonies. We may here also observe, that even in its present state, the remoter north has its own peculiar charms and advantages, and that by human industry it may attain to a much higher degree of productiveness, than we should be at first-sight tempted to suppose. In this sense ought to be taken the tradition of antiquity, as to the happy and virtuous people of the Hyperboreans; and it is easy to understand it in this sense without infering thence too many consequences. If, on the other hand, some able and learned naturalists, led away by this fact, appear almost inclined to regard the region of the North Pole, once in the enjoyment of a warm southern temperature, as one of the earliest, nay, the very earliest abode of the human race; I cannot follow them in their hypothesis, opposed as it is to the positive and unanimous tradition of many and most ancient nations, pointing with one concurrent voice to Central Asia as man's primitive dwelling-place. It appears, indeed, that the tradition of antiquity as to the Island of Atlantis ought to be considered historical; but instead of regarding this country as an island of the Blessed situated in the arctic circle, I think it much more natural to refer the whole tradition to an obscure nautical knowledge of America, or of those adjacent islands at which Columbus first touched, and to which the Phœnician pilots (who beyond all doubt circumnavigated Africa), may not improbably have been driven in the course of their voyage.

I have laid it down as an invariable maxim constantly to follow historical tradition and to hold fast by that clue, even when many things, in the testimony and declarations of tradition, appear strange and almost inexplicable, or at least enigmatical; for so soon as in the investigations of ancient history we let slip that thread of Ariadne, we can find no outlet from the labyrinth of fanciful theories, and the chaos of clashing opinions. For this reason I cannot concur in the very violent hypothesis which a celebrated geologist towards the close of the last century, M. De Luc, has hazarded respecting the deluge, and which the excellent Stolberg has adopted in his great historical work;\* although the author of this theory, so far from intending to oppose it to the Mosaic account of the

\* The History of Religion of Count Frederick Stolberg;—a noble monument raised by genius and learning to the honour of Religion.—*Trans.*

deluge, or to set aside the narrative of the inspired historian, conceived his hypothesis was calculated to furnish the strongest confirmation and clearest illustration of the sacred text. But I cannot reconcile his theory either with Holy Writ, or with the general testimony of historical tradition. The supposition is this, that the deluge was not a general inundation of the whole earth, according to the ordinary belief, but a mere change of the solid and fluid parts of the earth's surface, a dynamical transmutation of land and sea, so that what was formerly land became sea, and vice versâ. This is much more than can be found in the old account of the Noachian flood, or than a sound critical interpretation would infer; and the supposition that the names of rivers and countries occurring in the Bible, refer to those objects as they existed in the original dry land; and are again to be transferred to similar objects in the new land that sprung up with, or after, or out of the deluge; this supposition, I say, bears too evidently the stamp of arbitrary conjecture, to gain admission and credit with those who have taken historical tradition for their guide. If by the geological facts which offer, or which we think offer, satisfactory proof, not only of the general Noachian flood, but of more than one deluge and of still more violent catastrophes of nature; if by these geological facts before our eyes, such a total revolution and dynamic transmutation of land and sea were really proved (and the character of these proofs I must abandon to the investigation and judgment of others); this great revolution examined in an historical point of view, and in reference to the Mosaic history, must then be rather referred to that elder period, whereof it is said: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; but the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

These words which announce the presage of a new morn of creation, not only represent a darker and wilder state of the globe, but very clearly show the element of water to be still in predominant force. Even the division of the elements of the waters above the firmament, and of the waters below it, on the second day of creation—the permanent limitation of the sea for the formation and visible appearance of dry land, necessarily imply a mighty revolution in the earth, and afford additional proof that the Mosaic history speaks not only of

one, but of several catastrophes of nature ; a circumstance that has not been near enough attended to in the geological interpretation and illustration of the Bible. But to the bold and ill-founded hypothesis above-mentioned, many geological facts may be opposed, for in the midst of vast tracts and strata of an ancient bottom of the sea, many spots are found covered with the accumulated remains of land animals, with trunks of trees and various other products of vegetation, pertaining not to the sea, but to dry land.

With the clearest and most indubitable precision, the Mosaic history fixes the primitive dwelling-place of man in that central region of Western Asia situate near two great rivers, and amid four inland seas, the Persian and Arabian gulfs on the one hand, and the Caspian and Mediterranean seas on the other, and which is likewise designated for the same purpose by the concurrent traditions of most other primitive nations. The ancient tradition of the European nations as to their own origin and early history, conducts the inquirer constantly to the Caucasian regions, to Asia Minor, to Phœnicia, and to Egypt ; countries all of them contiguous to, in the vicinity and even on the coast of, that central region. Among the primitive Asiatic nations, the Chinese place the cradle of their origin and civilisation in the north-western province of Shensee ; and the Indians fix their's towards the north of the Himalaya Mountains. Thus this last tradition points to Bactriana, which, as it borders on Persia, approximates consequently to that central region ; whereof the holy and primitive country of the Persian Sagas, Atropatena or land of fire, now known by the name of Adherbijan, forms a part. With a clearness and precision which admit of no doubt, the Mosaic history designates the two great rivers of that central region, the Tigris and Euphrates, by the same names which they have ever afterwards borne ; and even the name of Eden, down to a later period, was affixed to a country near Damascus, and to another in Assyria. The third river of Paradise has been sought for by some in a more northerly direction—in the region of Mount Caucasus ; and though not with equal certainty as in the other two instances, they have thought to find it in the Phasis. The fourth river towards the south, the old interpreters generally took to be the Nile ; but the description of its course is so widely different from the pre-



sent situation of that river, and the present geography of the whole of those regions, that here at least a very great change must have occurred, in order to occasion this discrepancy between the old description of this river's course, and the present geography of the country.

In another circumstance also, which has been mostly too little attended to, this disparity between the Mosaic description and the present conformation of those regions is particularly striking. The geography of the rivers of Paradise, at least of two or three, may be easily traced, though the fourth remains a matter of uncertainty ; but the one source of Paradise in which those four rivers had their rise, in order thence to spread and diffuse fertility over the whole earth—this one source which is precisely the object of most importance, can nowhere be found on the earth ; whether it be dried or filled up, or howsoever it has been removed. In attending to some indications in Scripture, and without transgressing the due limits of interpretation, may we not be permitted to conjecture that the first chastisement inflicted on man by expulsion from his first glorious habitation and primeval home, may have been accompanied by a change in Paradise brought about by some natural convulsion? To judge by analogy, and from circumstances, which even a passage in Holy Writ alludes to, this convulsion must have been rather a volcanic eruption, by which even at the present day the sources of rivers are dried up, and their course completely changed, than a mere inundation that we are ever wont to regard as the sole possible cause of physical revolutions. Many vestiges of such changes may perhaps be proved from even geological observation;—thus to cite only one example, the Dead Sea in Palestine itself may be included in the number of those lakes that bear very evident traces of a volcanic origin. The supposition, however, which we have ventured to make, must not be looked upon in the light of a formal hypothesis, but rather as a question dictated by a love of inquiry, and by a desire for the further elucidation of a subject not yet sufficiently understood.

Thus have I now taken a general survey of the early condition of the globe, considered as the habitation of man, and as far as was necessary for that object ; and in this rapid sketch I have endeavoured, as far as was possible for a layman, to place

in the clearest light the most remarkable and best attested facts and discoveries of geology, with a constant attention to the testimony of primitive and historical tradition. No longer embarrassed by these physical discussions, we may now proceed to meet the main question: "What relation hath man to this his habitation—earth; what place doth he occupy therein; and what rank doth he hold among the other creatures and co-habitants of this globe; what is his proper destiny upon, and in relation to, the earth; and what is it which really constitutes him man?"

The absolute, and, for that reason, pagan system of natural philosophy spoken of above, has indeed, in these latter times, had the courage, laudable perhaps in the perverse course which it had taken, to rank man with the ape, as a peculiar species of the general kind. When in its anatomical investigations, it has numbered the various characteristics of this human ape, according to the number of its vertebræ, its toes, &c., it concedes to man, as his distinguishing quality, not what we are wont to call reason, perfectibility, or the faculty of speech, but "a capacity for constitutions!" Thus man would be a liberal ape! And so far from disagreeing with the author of this opinion, we think man may undoubtedly become so to a certain extent, although the idea that he was originally nothing more than a nobler or better disciplined ape is alike opposed to the voice of history, and the testimony of natural science. If in the examination of man's nature we will confine our view exclusively to the lower world of animals, I should say that the possible contagion and communication of various diseases, and organic properties and powers of animals, would prove in man rather a greater sympathy and affinity of organic life and animal blood with the cow, the sheep, the camel, the horse, and the elephant, than with the ape. Even in the venomous serpent and the mad dog, this deadly affinity of blood and this fearful contact of internal life exist in a different and nearer degree, than have yet been discovered in the ape. The docility, too, of the elephant and other generous animals, bears much stronger marks of analogy with reason than the cunning of the ape, in which the native sense of a sound, unprejudiced mind will always recognise an unsuccessful and abortive imitation of man. The resemblance of physiognomy and cast of countenance in

the lion, the bull, and the eagle, to the human face—a resemblance so celebrated in sculpture and the imitative arts, and which was interwoven into the whole mythology and symbolism of the ancients—this resemblance is founded on far deeper and more spiritual ideas than any mere comparison of dead bones in an animal skeleton can suggest.

The extremes of error, when it has reached the height of extravagance, often accelerate the return to truth; and thus to the assertion that man is nothing more than a liberalised ape, we may boldly answer that man, on the contrary, was originally, and by the very constitution of his being, designed to be the lord of creation, and, though in a subordinate degree, the legitimate ruler of the earth and of the world around him—the vicegerent of God in nature. And if he no longer enjoys this high prerogative to its full extent, as he might and ought to have done, he has only himself to blame; if he exercises his empire over creatures rather by indirect means and mechanical agency than by the immediate power and native energy of his own intellectual pre-eminence, he still is the lord of creation, and has retained much of the power and dignity he once received, did he but always make a right use of that power.

The distinguishing characteristic of man, and the peculiar eminence of his nature and his destiny, as these are universally felt and acknowledged by mankind, are usually defined to consist, either in reason, or in the faculty of speech. But this definition is defective in this respect, that, on one hand, reason is a mere abstract faculty, which to be judged, requires a psychological investigation or analysis; and that, on the other hand, the faculty of speech is a mere potentiality, or a germ which must be unfolded before it can become a real entity. We should therefore give a much more correct and comprehensive definition, if, instead of this, we said: The peculiar pre-eminence of man consists in this—that to him alone among all other of earth's creatures, the word has been imparted and communicated. The word actually delivered and really communicated is not a mere dead faculty, but an historical reality and occurrence; and for that very reason, the definition we have given stands much more fitly at the head of history, than the other more abstract one.



In the idea of the word, considered as the basis of man's dignity and peculiar destination, the internal light of consciousness and of our own understanding, is undoubtedly first included—this word is not a mere faculty of speech, but the fertile root whence the stately trunk of all language has sprung. But the word is not confined to this only—it next includes a living, working power—it is not merely an object and organ of knowledge—an instrument of teaching and learning;—but the medium of affectionate union and conciliatory accommodation, judicial arbitrement and efficacious command, or even creative productiveness, as our own experience and life itself manifest each of those significations of the word; and thus it embraces the whole plenitude of the excellencies and qualities which characterise man.

Nature, too, has her mute language and her symbolical writing; but she requires a discerning intellect to gain the key to her secrets, to unravel her profound enigmas; and, piercing through her mysteries, interpret the hidden sense of her word, and thus reveal the fulness of her glory. But he, to whom alone among all earth's creatures, the word has been imparted, has been for that reason constituted the lord and ruler of the earth. As soon, however, as he abandons that divine principle implanted in his breast; as soon as he loses that word of life which had been communicated and confided to him; he sinks down to a level with nature, and from her lord, becomes her vassal; and here commences the history of man.

## LECTURE II.

ON THE DISPUTE IN PRIMITIVE HISTORY, AND ON THE  
DIVISION OF THE HUMAN RACE.

“ In the beginning man had the word, and that word was from God.”

THUS the divine, Promethean spark in the human breast, when more accurately described and expressed in less figurative language, springs from the word originally communicated or intrusted to man, as that wherein consist his peculiar nature, his intellectual dignity, and his high destination.—The pregnant expression borrowed above from the New Testament, on the mystery and internal nature of God, may, with some variation, and bating, as is evident, the immense distance between the creature and the Creator, be applied to man and his primitive condition ; and may serve as a superscription or introduction to primitive history in the following terms : “ In the beginning man had the word, and that word was from God—and out of the living power communicated to man in and by that word, came the light of his existence.”—This is at least the divine foundation of all history—it falls not properly within the domain of history, but is anterior to it. To this position the *state of nature* among savages forms no valid objection ; for that this was the really original condition of mankind is by no means proved, and is arbitrarily assumed ; nay, on the contrary, the savage state must be looked upon as a state of degeneracy and degradation—consequently not as the first, but as the second, phenomenon in human history—as something which, as it has resulted from this second step in man’s progress, must be regarded as of a later origin.

In history, as in all science and in life itself, the principal point on which every thing turns, and the all-deciding problem, is, whether all things should be deduced from God, and God himself should be considered the first, nature the second existence—the latter holding undoubtedly a very important place,

or, whether, in the inverse order, the precedency should be given to nature, and, as invariably happens in such cases, all things should be deduced from nature only, whereby the Deity, though not by express unequivocal words, yet in fact is indirectly set aside, or remains at least unknown. This question cannot be settled, nor brought to a conclusion, by mere dialectic strife, which rarely leads to its object. It is the will which here mostly decides; and, according to the nature and leaning of his character, leads the individual to choose between the two opposite paths, the one he would follow in speculation and in science, in faith and in life.

Thus much at least we may say, in reference to the science of history, that they who in that department will consider nature only, and view man but with the eye of a naturalist (specious and plausible as their reasons may at first sight appear), will never rightly comprehend the world and reality of history, and never obtain an adequate conception, nor exhibit an intelligible representation of its phenomena. On the other hand, if we proceed not solely and exclusively from nature, but first from God and that beginning of nature appointed by God, so this is by no means a degradation or misapprehension of nature; nor does it imply any hostility towards nature—an hostility which could arise only from a very defective, erroneous, or narrow-minded conception of historical philosophy. On the contrary, experience has proved that by this course of speculation we are led more thoroughly to comprehend the glory of God in nature, and the magnificence of nature herself—a course of speculation quite consistent with the full recognition of nature's rights, and the share due to her in the history and progress of man.

Regarded in an historical point of view, man was created free—there lay two paths before him—he had to choose between the one, conducting to the realms above, and the other, leading to the regions below;—and thus at least he was endowed with the faculty of two different wills. Had he remained steadfast in his first will—that pure emanation of the Deity—had he remained true to the word which God had communicated to him—he would have had but one will. He would, however, have still been free; but his freedom would have resembled that of the heavenly spirits, whom we must not imagine to be devoid of freedom because they are no longer in



a state of trial, and can never be separated from God. We should, besides, greatly err, if we figured to ourselves the Paradiseic state of the first man as one of happy indolence; for, in truth, it was far otherwise designed, and it is clearly and expressly said that our first parent was placed in the garden of the earth to guard and cultivate it. "To guard," because an enemy was to be at hand, against whom it behoved to watch and to contend. "To cultivate," possibly in a very different manner, yet still with labour, though, doubtless, a labour blessed with far richer and more abundant recompense than afterwards, when, on man's account, the earth was charged with malediction.

This first divine law of nature, if we may so speak, by virtue of which labour and struggle became from the beginning the destiny of man, has retained its full force through all succeeding ages, and is applicable alike to every class, and every nation, to each individual as well as to mankind in general, to the most important, as to the most insignificant, relations of society. He who weakly shrinks from the struggle, who will offer no resistance, who will endure no labour nor fatigue, can neither fulfil his own vocation, whatever it be, nor contribute aught to the general welfare of mankind. But since man hath been the prey of discord, two different wills have contended within him for the mastery—a divine and a natural will. Even his freedom is no longer that happy freedom of celestial peace—the freedom of one who hath conquered and triumphed—but a freedom, as we now see it—the freedom of undetermined choice—of arduous, still undecided, struggle. To return to the divine will, or the one conformable to God—to restore harmony between the natural and the divine will, and to convert and transform more and more the lower, earthly, and natural will into the higher and divine one, is the great task of mankind in general, as of each individual in particular. And this return—this restoration—this transformation—all the endeavours after such—the progress or retrogressions in this path—constitute an essential part of universal history, so far as this embraces the moral development and intellectual march of humanity. But the fact that man, so soon as he loses the internal sheet-anchor of truth and life—so soon as he abandons the eternal law of divine ordinance, falls immediately under the dominion of nature, and becomes her bondsman, each individual may learn from his own interior, his own experience, and

a survey of life ; since the violent disorderly might of passion herself is only a blind power of nature acting within us. Although this fact is historical, and indeed the first of all historical facts, yet as it belongs to all mankind, and recurs in each individual, it may be regarded as a psychological fact and phenomenon of human consciousness. And on this very account it does not precisely fall within the limits of history, and it precedes all history ; but all the consequences or possible consequences of this fact, all the consequences that have really occurred, are within the essential province of history.

The next consequence which, after this internal discord had broken out in the consciousness and life of man, flowed from the development of this principle, was the division of the single race of man into a plurality of nations, and the consequent diversity of languages. As long as the internal harmony of the soul was undisturbed and unbroken, and the light of the mind unclouded by sin, language could be nought else than the simple and beautiful copy or expression of internal serenity ; and, consequently, there could be but one speech. But after the internal word, which had been communicated by God to man, had become obscured ; after man's connexion with his Creator had been broken ; even outward language necessarily fell into disorder and confusion. The simple and divine truth was overlaid with various and sensual fictions, buried under illusive symbols, and at last perverted into a horrible phantom. Even Nature, that, like a clear mirror of God's creation, had originally lain revealed and transparent to the unclouded eye of man, became now more and more unintelligible, strange, and fearful ; once fallen away from his God, man fell more and more into a state of internal conflict and confusion. Thus there sprang up a multitude of languages, alien one from the other, and varying with every climate, in proportion as mankind became morally disunited, geographically divided and dispersed, and even distinguished by an organic diversity of form ;—for when man had once fallen under the power and dominion of nature, his physical conformation changed with every climate. As a plant or animal indigenous to Africa or America has a totally different form and constitution in Asia, so it is with man ; and the races of mankind form so many specific variations of the same kind, from the negro to the copper-coloured American and the

savage islander of the South Sea. The expression *races*, however, applied to man, involves something abhorrent from his high uplifted spirit, and debasing to its native dignity. This diversity of races among men no one ought to exaggerate in a manner so as to raise doubts as to the identity of their origin ; for, according to a general organic law, which indeed is allowed to hold good in the natural history of animals, races capable of a prolific union, must be considered of the same origin, and as constituting the same species. Even the apparent chaos of different languages may be classed into kindred families, which, though separated by the distance of half the globe, seem still very closely allied. Of these different families of tongues, the first and most eminent are those by which their internal beauty, and the noble spirit breathing through them and apparent in their whole construction, denote for the most part a higher origin and divine inspiration ; and, much as all these languages differ from each other, they appear, after all, to be merely branches of one common stem.

The American tribes appear, indeed, to be singularly strange, and to stand at a fearful distance from the rest of mankind ; yet the European writer,\* most deeply conversant with those nations and their languages, has found in their traditions and tongues, and even in their manners and customs, many positive and incontestable points of analogy with Eastern Asia and its inhabitants.

When man had once fallen from virtue, no determinable limit could be assigned to his degradation, nor how far he might descend by degrees, and approximate even to the level of the brute ; for, as from his origin he was a being essentially free, he was in consequence capable of change, and even in his organic powers most flexible.

We must adopt this principle as the only clue to guide us in our inquiries, from the negro who, as well from his bodily strength and agility, as from his docile and in general excellent character is far from occupying the lowest grade in the scale of humanity, down to the monstrous Patagonian, the almost imbecile Peshwerais, and the horrible cannibal of New Zealand, whose very portrait excites a shudder in the beholder. How, even in the midst of civilisation, man may degenerate into

\* Schlegel alludes to Alexander von Humboldt.—*Trans.*



the savage state; to what a pitch of moral degradation he may descend, those can attest who have had opportunities of investigating more closely the criminal history of great culprits, and even, at some periods, the history of whole nations. In fact, every revolution is a transient period of barbarism, in which man, while he displays partial examples of the most heroic virtue and generous self-devotion, is often half a savage. Nay, a war conducted with great animosity and protracted to extremities, may easily degenerate into such a state of savage ferocity: hence it is the highest glory of truly civilised nations to repress and subdue, by the sentiment of honour, by a system of severe discipline, and by a generous code of warfare, respected alike by all the belligerent parties, that tendency and proneness to cruelty and barbarity inherent in man.

Among the different tribes of savages, there are many, indeed, that appear to be of a character incomparably better and more noble than those above-mentioned; yet, after the first ever so favourable impression, a closer investigation will almost always discover in them very bad traits of character and manners.—So far from seeking with Rousseau and his disciples for the true origin of mankind, and the proper foundation of the social compact, in the condition even of the best and noblest savages; and so little disposed are we to remodel society upon this boasted ideal of a pretended state of nature, that we regard it, on the contrary, as a state of degeneracy and degradation. Thus in his origin, and by nature, man is no savage:—he may, indeed, at any time and in any place, and even at the present day, become one easily and rapidly, but in general, not by a sudden fall, but by a slow and gradual declension; and we the more willingly adopt this view as there are many historical grounds of probability that, in the origin of mankind, this second fall of man was not immediate and total, but slow and gradual, and that consequently all those tribes which we call savage are of the same origin with the noblest and most civilised nations, and have only by degrees descended to their present state of brutish degradation.

Even the division of the human race into a plurality of nations, and the chaotic diversity of human tongues, appear, from historical tradition, to have become general and complete only at a more advanced period; for, in the beginning, mention is made but of one separation of mankind into two races or hostile classes.

I use the general expression historical tradition ; for the brief and almost enigmatical, but very significant and pregnant words, in which the first great outward discord, or conflict of mankind in primitive history, is represented in the Mosaic narrative, are corroborated in a very remarkable degree by the Sagas of other nations, among which I may instance in particular those of the Greeks and the Indians. Although this primitive conflict, or opposition among men, is represented in these traditions under various local colours, and not without some admixture of poetical embellishment, yet this circumstance serves only for the better confirmation of the fundamental truth, if we separate the essential matter from the adventitious details. Before I attempt to place in a clearer light this first great historical event, which, indeed, constitutes the main subject of all primitive history, by showing the strong concurrence of the many and various authorities attesting it ; it may be proper to call your attention to a third fundamental canon of historical criticism, which, indeed, requires no lengthened demonstration, and is merely this, that in all inquiries, particularly into ancient and primitive history, we must not reject as impossible or improbable whatever strikes us at first as strange or marvellous. For it often happens that a closer investigation and a deeper knowledge of a subject proves those things precisely to be true, which at the first view or impression, appeared to us as the most singular ; while, on the other hand, if we persist in estimating truth and probability by the sole standard of objects vulgar and familiar to ourselves ; and if we will apply this exclusive standard to a world and to ages so totally different, and so widely remote from our own, we shall be certainly led into the most violent and most erroneous hypotheses.

In entering on this subject we must observe that, in the Mosaic account, primitive and, what we call, universal history, does not properly commence with the first man, his creation or ulterior destiny, but with Cain—the fratricide and curse of Cain. The preceding part of the sacred narrative regards, if we may so speak, only the private life of Adam, which, however, will always retain a deep significancy for all the descendants of the first progenitor.

The origin of discord in man, and the transmission of that mischief to all ages and all generations, is, indeed, the first historical fact ; but on account of its universality, it forms, at

the same time, as I have before observed, a psychological phenomenon; and while, in this first section of sacred history, every thing points and refers to the mysteries of religion; the fratricide of Cain on the other hand, and the flight of that restless criminal to Eastern Asia, are the first events and circumstances which properly belong to the province of history. In this account we see first the foundation of the most ancient city, by which undoubtedly we must understand a great, or at least an old and celebrated city of Eastern Asia; and, secondly, the origin of various hereditary classes, trades, and arts; especially of those connected with the first knowledge and use of metals, and which, doubtless, hold the first place in the history of human arts and discoveries.

The music, which is attributed to those primitive ages, consisted, probably, rather in a medicinal or even magical use of that art, than in the beautiful system of later melody. Among the various works and instruments of smithcraft, and productions of art which the knowledge of mines and metals led to, the momentous discovery of the sword is particularly mentioned: by the brief enigmatic words which relate this discovery, it is difficult to know whether we are to understand them as the expression of a spirit of warlike enthusiasm, or of a renewed curse and dire wailing over all the succeeding centuries of hereditary murder, and progressive evil, under the divine permission. In all probability, these words refer to the origin of human sacrifices, emanating as they did from an infernal design, which we must consider as one of the strongest characteristics of this race; and those bloody sacrifices of the primitive world seem to have stamped on the rites and customs, as well as on the traditions and sentiments of many nations, a peculiar character of gloom and sadness. From this race were descended not only the inhabitants of cities, but nomade tribes, whereof many led, several thousand years ago, the same wandering life which they follow at the present day in the central parts of Eastern Asia, where vast remains of primitive mining operations are frequently found.

It is worthy of remark that, among one of these nations, the Ishudes, who inhabit a metallic mountain, we find, if we may so speak, an inverted history of Cain; mention is made of the enmity between the first two brothers of mankind, but all the circumstances are set forth in a party-spirit favourable



to Cain. It is said that the elder brother acquired wealth by gold and silver mines, but that the younger, becoming envious, drove him away, and forced him to take refuge in the East.\*

So is the race of Cain and Cain's sons represented from its origin, as one attached to the arts, versed in the use of metals, disinclined to peace, and addicted to habits of warfare and violence, as again at a later period, it appears in Scripture as a haughty and wicked race of giants.

On the other hand, the peaceful race of Patriarchs who lived in a docile reverence of God and with a holy simplicity of manners, were descended from Seth. This second progenitor of mankind occupies a very prominent place even in the traditions of other nations, which make particular mention of the columns of Seth, signifying no doubt in the language of remote antiquity, very ancient monuments, and, as it were, the stony records of sacred tradition. In general, the first ten holy Progenitors or Patriarchs of the primitive world are mentioned under different names in the Sagas, not only of the Indians, but of several other Asiatic nations, though undoubtedly with important variations, and not without much poetical colouring. But as in these traditions we can clearly discern the same general traits of history, this diversity of representation serves only to corroborate the main truth, and to illustrate it more fully and forcibly. The views, therefore, of those modern theologians, who represent the concurrent testimony of Gentile nations to the truths of primitive history as derived solely from the Mosaic narrative, and, as it were, transcribed from a genuine copy of our Bible, are equally narrow-minded and erroneous.

It would be more just and more consonant with the whole spirit of the primitive world, to assert, what indeed may be conceded with little difficulty, that these nations had received much from the primeval source of sacred tradition; but they regarded as a peculiar possession, and represented under peculiar forms, the common blessings of primitive revelation; and, instead of preserving in their integrity and purity the traditions and oracles of the primitive world, they overlaid them with poetical ornament, so that their whole traditions wear a fabulous aspect, until a nearer and more patient inves-

\* See Ritter's Geography, 1st part, page 548,— 1st Edition in German.

tigation clearly discovers in them the main features of historic truth.

Under these two different forms, therefore, doth tradition reveal to us the primitive world, or, in other words, these are the two grand conditions of humanity which fill the records of primitive history. On the one hand, we see a race, lovers of peace, revering God, blessed with long life, which they spend in patriarchal simplicity and innocence, and still no strangers to deeper science, especially in all that relates to sacred tradition and inward contemplation, and transmitting their science to posterity in the old or symbolical writing; not in fragile volumes, but on durable monuments of stone. On the other hand, we behold a giant race of pretended demigods, proud, wicked, and violent, or, as they are called in the later Sagas of the heroic times, the heaven-storming Titans.

This opposition, and this discord—this hostile struggle between the two great divisions of the human race, forms the whole tenure of primitive history. When the moral harmony of man had once been deranged, and two opposite wills had sprung up within him, a divine will or a will-seeking God, and a natural will or a will bent on sensible objects, passionate and ambitious, it is easy to conceive how mankind from their very origin must have diverged into two opposite paths.

Although this primitive division of mankind is now characterised as a difference of races, this is far from being merely the case; and that opposition which distracted the primitive world had far deeper causes than the mere distinction of a noble and a meaner race of men. It is somewhat in this manner a German scholar of the last generation divided all nations now existing, or which have appeared within the later historical ages, into two classes; wherever he imagined he found his favourite Celts and their descendants, he had not words strong enough to extol their romantic heroism; while he pursued with the most pitiless animosity, over the whole face of the earth, the unfortunate Monguls, and all those he deduced from that stock. The struggle which divided the primitive world into two great parties, arose far more from the opposition of feelings and of principles, than from difference of extraction. Great as is the interval which separates those ages and that world from our own, we can easily comprehend how this first mighty contest of

nations, which history makes mention of, was, in fact, a struggle between two religious parties — two hostile sects, though indeed under far other forms, and in different relations from any thing we witness in the present state of the world. It was, in one word, a contest between religion and impiety, conducted, however, on the mighty scale of the primitive world, and with all those gigantic powers which, according to ancient tradition, the first men possessed.\*

The Greek Sagas represent this two-fold state of mankind in the primitive ante-historical ages in a very peculiar manner, as the gradual decline and corruption of successive generations; of this kind is the tradition of the ages of the world, whereof four or five are numbered. The Golden age of human felicity and the Brazen age of all-ruling violence form the two essential terms of this tradition; and the intermediate ages are mere links, or points of transition, to render the account more complete.

In the age of Saturn, the first race allied to the gods lived in peace and happiness, and were blessed with eternal youth; the earth poured forth her fruits and gifts in spontaneous

\* We must not suppose that the impiety of the Cainites was of a dogmatic kind. How could those primitive men, living so near the Fountain-head of revelation, conversing with those who had witnessed the rise and first development of man's marvellous history, endowed with that quick, intuitive science which, in the operations of external nature, revealed to them the agency of invisible spirits, witnessing the wondrous manifestations of God's love and power, the active ministry of his messengers of light; and, lastly, engaged themselves in a close communication with the infernal powers: how could they, I say, fall into atheism or any other species of speculative unbelief? Their impiety was of a more practical nature, displaying itself in a daring violation of the precepts of Heaven, and in the practice of a dark, mysterious magic. By the allurements of sense, and the fascination of their false science, they by degrees inveigled the great mass of mankind into their errors. Their vast powers, supported and strengthened by infernal agency, were calculated to introduce disorder and confusion in the economy of the moral and physical universe, and to let loose on this probationary world the science of the abyss. What do I say? The barrier between the visible and invisible world would have been broken down—Hell would have ruled the earth, had not the Almighty, by an awful judgment, buried the guilty race of men and their infernal knowledge in the waters of the Deluge. In the race of Cham, however, which perpetuated so many traditions of the early Cainites, some fragments of this ante-diluvian science of evil were preserved; and traces of it may still be discerned among the worshippers of Siva in India.—*Trans.*



abundance, and even the end of human life was not a real or painful death, but a gentle slumber into another and higher world of immortal spirits. But the next generation in the age of Silver is represented as wicked, devoid of reverence for the gods, and giving loose to every turbulent passion. In the Brazen age this state of crime and disorder reached its highest pitch; lordly violence was the characteristic of the rude and gigantic Titans. Their arms were of copper and their instruments and utensils of brass, and even, in the construction of their edifices, they made use of copper; for as the old poet says, "black iron was not then known;" a circumstance which we must consider as strictly historical, and as characteristic of the primitive nations. Between this and the following age, the better heroic race of poetical and even historic tradition is somewhat strangely introduced; and the whole series of generations is closed by the Iron age, the present and last period of the world—the term of man's progressive degeneracy.

This idea of a gradual and deeper degradation of human kind in each succeeding age, appears at first sight not to accord very well with the testimony which sacred tradition furnishes on man's primitive state; for it represents the two races of the primitive world as contemporary; and indeed Seth, the progenitor of the better and nobler race of virtuous Patriarchs, was much younger than Cain. However, this contradiction is only apparent, if we reflect that it was the wicked and violent race which drew the other into its disorders, and that it was from this contamination a giant corruption sprang, which continually increased till, with a trifling exception, it pervaded the whole mass of mankind, and till the justice of God required the extirpation of degenerate humanity by one universal Flood.

In the Indian Sagas the two races of the primitive world are represented in a state of continual or perpetually-renewed warfare:—wicked nations of giants attack one or other of the two Brahminical races that descend from the virtuous Patriarchs; generous and divinely-inspired heroes come to their assistance, and achieve many wonderful victories over these formidable foes. Such is the chief subject of all the great epic poems, and most ancient heroic Sagas of the Indians. In conformity to their present modes of thinking, and to their present constitution of society, they describe that fierce race of giants as

a degraded caste of warriors; and they even give that denomination to many nations well known in later history, such as the Chinese, who bear the same name with them as with ourselves; the Pahlavas, who were a tribe of the ancient Medes and Persians, corresponding to one of the two sacred languages of ancient Persia—the Pahlavi—and the Ionians or Yavanas according to the Asiatic denomination of the primitive Greeks.

It may even be a matter of doubt, whether a regular caste of warriors, and an hereditary priesthood, according to the very ancient system of the hereditary division of classes, did not exist in the primitive world. However great may be the chronological confusion evinced in these poems and Sagas, however much, perhaps, of later history may have been interwoven into their ancient narratives, and however much of poetical embellishment and gigantic hyperbole the whole may have received, the leading features of historic truth may still be distinguished with certainty in the chequered tablet of tradition. For the hostility of two rival races in the primitive world, considered in itself, and independently of adventitious circumstances, must be looked upon as a positive and well authenticated fact. It might perhaps be proved before the tribunal of the severest historical criticism, that poetry, that is to say, primitive historic tradition clothed with the ornaments of poetry—is often much nearer the truth in its representations of the primitive world than a dull reason, that draws its estimate of probability from mere vulgar analogies, and which sees or affects to see everywhere, only stupid and brutish savages.

A circumstance which we must never lose sight of in this inquiry is that man did not suffer an immediate and entire loss of those high powers with which he had been endowed at his origin; but that the loss was gradual, and that for a long time yet he retained much of those powers, and that it was indeed the fearful abuse of those faculties in his last stage of degeneracy which produced that enormous licentiousness and wickedness spoken of in Holy Writ. And this is the real clue to the whole purport of primitive history, and to all that appears to us in it so full of enigma. This leading subject of primitive history—the struggle between two races, as it is the first great event in universal history, is also of the utmost importance in the investigation of the subsequent progress of nations; for this original contest and opposition among men, according to

the two-fold direction of the will, a will conformable to that of God, and a will carnal, ambitious, and enslaved to Nature, often recurs, though on a lesser scale, in later history; or at least we can perceive something like a feeble reflection or a distant echo of this primal discord. And even at the present period, which is certainly much nearer to the last than to the first ages of the world, it would appear sometimes as if humanity were again destined, as at its origin, to be more and more separated into two parties, or two hostile divisions. And as the greatest of German philosophers, Leibnitz, admirably observed that the sect of atheism would be the last in Christendom and in the world; so it is highly probable that this sect was the last in the primitive world, though stamped with the peculiar form which society at that period must have given to it, and on a scale of more gigantic magnitude.

On this important subject we have another observation to make, which refers more properly to an incidental circumstance in primitive history; for our great business is with the moral and intellectual progress of man. But even in respect to this more important object, the circumstance which we allude to should not be passed over in silence, as it tends to exemplify, illustrate, and confirm the principle we have already had occasion to enforce; namely, that we ought not to estimate by the narrow standard of present analogies and vulgar probabilities, all those facts in primitive nature and in primitive history which strike us as so strange, mysterious, and marvellous; provided they be really attested by ancient monuments and ancient tradition. We should ever bear in mind what a mighty wall of separation--what an impassable abyss--divides us from that remote world both of nature and of man. I refer to the unanimous testimony of ancient tradition respecting the gigantic forms of the first men, and their corresponding longevity, far exceeding, as it did, the present ordinary standard of the duration of human life. With respect to the latter circumstance, indeed, there are so very many causes contributing to shorten considerably the length of human life, that we have completely lost every criterion by which to estimate its original duration; and it would be no slight problem for a profound physiological science to discover and explain from a deeper investigation of the internal constitution of the earth, or of astronomical influences, which are often susceptible of very



minute applications, the primary cause of human longevity. By a simpler course of life and diet than the very artificial, unnatural, and over-refined modes we follow, there are even at the present day numerous examples of a longevity far beyond the ordinary duration of human life. In India it is by no means uncommon to meet with men, especially in the Brahminical caste, more than a hundred years of age, and in the enjoyment of a robust, and even generative vigour of constitution. In the labouring class in Russia, whose mode of living is so simple, there are examples of men living to more than a hundred, a hundred and twenty, and even a hundred and fifty years of age; and although these instances form but rare exceptions, they are less uncommon there than in other European countries. There are even remarkable cases of old men who, after the entire loss of their teeth, have gained a complete new set, as if their constitution had received a new sap of life, and a principle of second growth. What, in the present physical degeneracy of mankind, forms but a rare exception, may originally have been the ordinary measure of the duration of human life, or at least may afford us some trace and indication of such a measure; more especially as other branches of natural science offer correspondent analogies. On the other side of that great wall of separation which divides us from the primitive ages—in that remote world so little known to us, a standard for the duration of human life very different from the present may have prevailed; and such an opinion is extremely probable, supported as it is by manifold testimony, and confirmed by the sacred record of man's divine origin.

In order better to understand and judge more correctly of the biblical number of years in human life, we ought never to overlook the very religious purport of the symbolical relation of numbers in the divine chronology. We should thus ever keep ourselves in readiness, as, according to the expression of Holy Writ, the hairs on a man's head are numbered—and how much more so the years of his life!—and as nothing here must be considered fortuitous, but all things as predetermined and regulated according to the views of Providence. Again, as the Scripture often mentions that, in the hidden decrees of his mercy, the Almighty hath graciously been pleased to shorten the duration of a determined space of time:—as, for example, a course of irreversible suffering—or, on the other hand, hath

added a certain number of years to a determined period of grace, or prolonged the duration of a man's life; it behoves us to examine which of these two courses of divine favour be in any proposed case discoverable. In the extreme longevity of the holy Patriarchs of the primitive world—a longevity which as has been long proved and acknowledged, must be understood with reference only to the common astronomical years, the latter course of the divine goodness is discernible, and human life in those ages must be regarded as miraculously and supernaturally prolonged.\* In the duration of Enoch's life, that holy prophet of the primitive world, whose translation was no death, but which, as the exit originally designed for man, should on that account be considered natural, the coincidence with the astronomical number of days in the sun's course round the earth is the more striking, as in the number of 365 years the number 83 is comprised as the root—a number which, in every respect, and in the most various application, is discovered to be the primary number of the earth. For, with the slight difference of an unit, the number of 365 years corresponds to the sum of 333, with the addition of 33; but the number of days strictly comprised in those 365 years amounts to four times 33,000, with the addition of four times 330 days.

With regard to the gigantic stature attributed to the primitive race of men, by the authentic testimony of universal tradition;—a testimony which it is easy to distinguish from mere poetical embellishment or exaggeration—it is singular that

\* Noah affords another striking example of a wonderful prolongation or delay of time. The first nine Patriarchs of the primitive world propagated their race at the mean or average term of the hundredth year of their lives:—some near that period—others considerably earlier—and others again much later. But in the case of Noah we find that, to the mean term of a hundred years, four hundred were yet added; and that the Patriarch was five hundred years of age when he propagated his race. The high motive of this evidently supernatural delay may be traced to the fact that, although during this long prophetic period of preparation, the holy Seer well foresaw and felt firmly assured of the judgments impending over a degenerate and corrupt world, it was not equally clear to him that he was destined by God to be the second progenitor of mankind, and the renovator of the human race. But that great doom of the world, already foretold by Enoch, Noah probably expected to be its last end; and hence perhaps might consider the propagation of his race as not altogether conformable to the divine will, till the hidden decrees of the Eternal were more fully and more clearly revealed to him.

those who are otherwise so disposed to apply the analogies of nature to the human species, should in this instance, at least, hold up the now ordinary scale of human bulk as the only standard of probability and certainty. The remains, more than once alluded to, of that primitive world which has perished, show that of the elephant, rhinoceros, and hippopotamus, the largest of all existing animals, there were originally from twenty to thirty different tribes and species which are now extinct. Of the mammoth, that gigantic animal of antiquity, remains of which are found not only in Siberia and America, but in the different countries of Europe, near Paris, and even in this immediate neighbourhood, a great number of various species have been also proved to have existed from the investigation of these antediluvian remains. Even of animals more familiar to us, bones and other remains have been discovered of a very unusual and truly gigantic size. Bulls' horns fastened together by a front-bone—antlers of stags, and elephants' tusks have been found, which prove those animals to have been of a dimension, three, four, or five times greater than they usually are at present. If in this elder period of organic nature, and of an animal kingdom which has become extinct, this gigantic style was so very prevalent, is it not reasonable to infer a similar analogy in the human species, so far at least as relates to their physical conformation, especially when this analogy is unanimously attested by the primitive Sagas and traditions of all nations?

As regards our sacred writings, I must observe that they tacitly imply, and indeed pretty clearly attest, the superior stature as well as great longevity of the first men, while, on the other hand, they represent the really gigantic structure of body as an organic degradation and degeneracy, originating in the illicit union of the two primitive races—the Cainites and the Sethites—an union which was the source of universal corruption—as the all-destroying deluge was a mighty judgment brought about by the pride and wickedness of those giants and was indeed against those principally directed.—Even at a later period, the Scripture speaks of some nations of giants, that, prior to the introduction of the Israelites into the promised land, occupied several of its provinces, such as Moab, Ammon, Bashan, and the country about the primitive city of giants—



Hebron. These tribes are represented as celebrated for valour indeed, yet as inclined solely to warfare, wild and wicked ; and even the individual giants that appear in the age of Moses and in the history of David, are described as peculiarly monstrous from their great corporal deformity. The only savage tribe now existing (as far as our present knowledge of the globe can enable us to speak,) possessed of a very uncommon, enormous, and almost gigantic stature—the Patagonians of America, are at the same time noted for their personal deformity. With them it is the upper part of the body that is of such a disproportionate length, for when seen on horseback they appear to be real giants, and hence they were so accounted at first. When on a closer inspection we see the whole length of their bodies in the attitude either of standing or of walking, we perceive indeed they are of the very extraordinary height of from seven to eight feet, but not of that gigantic stature which the first impression led us to suppose, and which may so naturally have given rise to exaggerated accounts.

After all this, and what has been above stated, I need say no more than frankly declare that, as to these two points, the extraordinary longevity and gigantic stature of the first men,—I never could have the courage to raise a formal doubt against the plain declaration of Holy Writ, and the general testimony of primitive tradition. The full explanation, the more correct conception, and the perfect comprehension of these two facts are perhaps reserved for a later period, and the investigations of a deeper physical science.

There exist, also, monuments, or rather fragments of edifices, of the most primitive antiquity, which, as they are connected with the subject under discussion, are here deserving of a slight notice. I allude to those cyclopean walls, which are to be found in several parts of Italy, and which those who have once seen will not easily forget, nor the singular stamp of antiquity they bear. In this very peculiar architecture, we see, instead of the stones of the usual cubical or oblong form, huge fragments of rock rudely cut into the shape of an irregular polygon, and skilfully enough joined together. Even the great, and often admired, subterraneous aqueduct, or Cloaca of ancient Rome is considered as belonging to this cyclopean architecture, remains of which exist also near Argos, and in several other parts of Greece. These edifices were certainly not built by the

celebrated nations that at a later period occupied these countries; for even they regarded them as the work and production of a primitive and departed race of giants; and hence the name which these monuments received. When we consider how very imperfect must have been the instruments of those remote ages, and that they cannot be supposed to have possessed that knowledge in mechanics which the Egyptians, for instance, display in the erection of their obelisks; we can easily conceive how men were led to imagine that more vigorous arms and other powers than those belonging to the present race of men, were necessary to the construction of those edifices of rock.

Thus have we now endeavoured to explain, as far as was necessary for our purpose, the origin of that dissension, which is inherent in human nature, and forms the basis of all history. We have, in the next place, sought to unfold and illustrate the universal tradition, which attests the hostility between the virtuous Patriarchs and the proud Titans of the primitive world, or the different and opposite spirit that characterised the two primitive races of mankind; assigning, at the same time, to savage nations, or to the more degraded portions of human kind, their proper place in history—a place important undoubtedly, but still secondary in the great scheme of humanity.

These facts, too important to be passed over in silence, form the introduction, and are, as it were, the porch to universal history, and to the civilisation of the human species in the later historical ages. Now that we have seen mankind divided and split into a plurality of nations, our next task, in the period which follows, is to discover the most remarkable and most civilised nations, and to observe in what peculiar forms the Word, whether innate in man, or communicated to him—the word which may be considered the essence of all the high prerogatives and characteristic qualities of man; to observe, we say, in what peculiar forms the word is assumed among each of those nations, in their language and writing, in their religious traditions, their historical Sagas, their poetry, art and science. In the account of ancient nations, we shall adopt the ethnographical mode of treating history; and it will be only in modern and more recent times that this method will gradually give place to the synchronical; and the reasons of this change will be suggested by the very nature of the subject. In this general survey, we must confine ourselves to those mighty and celebrated

nations who have attained to a high degree of intellectual excellence ; and we shall select and briefly state remarkable traits or extraordinary historical facts illustrative of the manners, social institutions, political refinement, and even political history of every nation, worthy of occupying a place in this sketch, in order the better to mark the progress of the intellectual principle in the peculiar culture and modes of thinking of each. It is only at a later period that political history becomes the main object of attention, and almost the leading principle in the progressive march, and even the partial retrogressions of mankind.

In this general picture of the earliest development of the human mind, we can select such nations only as are sufficiently well known, or respecting whom the sources of information are now at least of easier access ; for were we to comprehend in this general survey, nations with whom we were less perfectly acquainted, we should be led into minute and interminable researches, without, after all, perhaps, obtaining any new or satisfactory result for the principal object in view. In the first period of antiquity will figure the Chinese, the Indians, and the Egyptians, besides the isolated, and the so-called chosen people of the Hebrews ; and if I commence by the remotest of the civilised countries of Asia, China, I beg leave to premise that I mean to determine no question of priority as to the respective antiquity of those nations, or to adjudge any preference to one or other amongst them. Indeed, their own chronological accounts and pretensions, which often deserve the name of chronological fictions, turn out, on a closer inquiry, to be mere calculations of astronomical periods ; and a sound historical criticism will not admit that they were originally meant to be chronological. Suffice it to say that the three nations we have mentioned belonged to the same period of the world, and attained to an equal, or a very similar, degree of moral and intellectual refinement ; and so in respect to that higher object, the chronological dispute becomes unnecessary, or is, at least, of minor importance. Among those, however, who take an active part in these researches, a partiality for one or other of these nations, and for their respective antiquity, easily springs up ; for even objects the most remote will excite in the human breast the spirit of party. In order to keep as free as possible from prepossessions of this kind, I have adopted a species of geo-



graphical division of my subject, which, when I come to treat later of the different periods of modern history, will give place to a more chronological arrangement. I said a *species* of geographical division, for undoubtedly from the special nature of this historical inquiry, it must be supposed I shall take a different point of view in the geographical survey of the earth than ordinarily occurs in geographical investigations. The geographies for common use properly take as their basis the present situation of the different states and kingdoms now in existence, but a more scientific geography adopts the direction of mountains, and the course of rivers, the valleys produced by the former, and the space occupied by the waters of the latter, as the leading clue to the division and arrangement of the earth. Thus in the philosophy of history the series of the principal civilised states will form a high, commanding chain ; and the philosophic historian will have to follow from east to west, or in any other direction that history may point out, not merely rivers transporting articles of commerce, but the mighty stream of traditions and doctrines which has traversed and fertilised the world.

As the individuals who can be termed historical form but rare exceptions among mankind, so in the whole circumference of the globe, there are only a certain number of nations that occupy an important and really historical place in the annals of civilisation. By far the greater part of the inhabited or habitable globe, however rich and ample a field it may offer to the investigations of the naturalist, cannot be included in this class, or has not attained to this degree of eminence. In the whole continent of Africa, there is, besides Egypt, only the northern coast stretching along the Mediterranean, that is at all connected with the history and intellectual progress of the civilised world. The other coasts of Africa, including its southernmost cape, furnish points of importance to commerce, navigation, and even some attempts at colonisation ; while the interior parts of this continent, still so little known, possess much to excite the attention and wonder of the naturalist ; but beyond this, its maritime as well as central regions, cannot be said to occupy a place in the intellectual history, or in the moral progress of our species. It is only since it has formed a province of the Russian Empire, that the vast territory of Northern Asia has become known to us, and has

been as it were, newly discovered. From central and eastern Asia, from the south of Tartary and the north of China, many mighty and conquering nations have issued, that have spread the terror of their arms over the face of civilisation, as far as the frontiers of Europe.

But, in the march and development of the human mind, these nations are far from occupying the same eminent station. In this respect, also, the fifth continent of the globe, Polynesia—though nearly equal to Europe in extent, counts as nought. Even America, the largest of those continents, occupies here a comparatively subordinate rank ; and it is only in latter ages, and since its discovery, that it can be said to belong to history. Since that period, indeed, the inhabitants of this portion of the world have adopted, for the most part, the language, the manners, the modes of thinking, and the political institutions of Europe ; for the still subsisting remnant of its ancient savages is very inconsiderable ; so that America may be regarded as a remote dependency, and, as it were, a continuation of old Europe on the other side of the Atlantic. Great as the re-action may be, which this second Europe, sprung up in the solitudes of the new world, has during the last fifty years exerted on its mother-continent, still as this influence forms a part but of very recent history, it is only in very modern times that America has obtained any historical weight and importance.

Even in this natural configuration, the new world is more widely different from the old, than the principal parts of the latter are from each other. As in comparing the northern extremity of the earth with its southern or aqueous extremity, we observe a striking disparity, and almost complete opposition between the two ; so we shall find this to be the case, if, in advancing in the opposite direction from east to west, we divide the whole surface of the earth into two equal parts. On one hand that more important division of the earth, extending from the western coast of Africa to the eastern coast of Asia, comprises the three ancient continents, which, from the upper to the middle part, occupy almost the whole space of this half of the globe. Here is the greatest quantity of land, and the animal kingdom, too, is on a more large and magnificent scale. It is only at the southern extremity of this hemisphere that sea and water are predominant ; and here a continuous chain

of islands from the southernmost point of Asia reaches to the fifth and last portion of the globe—Australia, making it a sort of Asiatic dependency. In the American hemisphere, the element of water is predominant, not only at the southern extremity, but towards the middle; for, large as America may be, it can bear no comparison with the other continents in respect to extent of surface. Our hemisphere is more remarkable even for extent of population than for the quantity of land. Here, indeed, is the chief seat of population, and the principal theatre of human history and human civilisation.

The entire population of America, which, as it is for the most part of European extraction, is better known to us than that of many countries more contiguous—the entire population of America at the highest computation of the whole number of inhabitants on the globe, forms but a thirtieth part, and at the lowest computation, not a four-and-twentieth part of the whole. Widely extended as this thinly-peopled continent is, the whole number of its inhabitants scarcely exceeds the population of a single great European state, such as either France or Germany, whose population, indeed, it about equals. Vegetation, indeed, is most rich and luxuriant in America; but the two most generous plants reared by human culture, and which are so closely connected with the primitive history of man—corn and the vine—were originally unknown in this quarter of the world. In the animal kingdom, America is far inferior to the other and more ancient continents of the globe. Many of the noblest and most beautiful species of animals did not exist there originally; and others, again, were found most unseemly in form, and most degenerate in nature. Some species of animals indigenous to that continent form but a feeble compensation for the absence of others, the most useful and most necessary for the purposes of husbandry and the domestic uses of man. We may boldly lay it down as a general proposition not to be taxed with error or exaggeration, that in the new hemisphere, vegetation is predominant, while in the old, animal force preponderates, and is more fully developed. This superiority is apparent, not only in the comparative extent of population, but in the organic structure of the human form. Even the African tribes are far superior in bodily strength and agility to the aboriginal natives of America; and in point of longevity and fecundity, the latter



are not to be compared with the Malayan race, and the Mongul tribes in the central or north-eastern parts of Asia, and in Southern Tartary, races with whom, in other respects, they seem to bear some analogy.

As the American continent, in other respects so incomplete, is mostly separated from all the others; and its form is more simple and less complex than that of the ancient divisions of the globe, it well deserves our consideration in that point of view; and it may perhaps furnish the general type and true geographical outline of a continent in its natural state. A narrow isthmus connects the upper half, stretching in a widely extended tract towards the North Pole, and the inferior part, with its southern peak; and thus both form, according to general impression, but one and the same continent; and so prove, in fact, how totally the northern and southern parts of a continent may differ. That now in the period when the Euxine was still united to the Caspian, when the White Sea stretched further into land, and the Ural Mountains formed an island, or were surrounded to the north and south by the sea, Asia and Europe were probably separated towards the north, is a point to which we have already had occasion to allude. But if, on the one hand, Europe was separated from Asia, it might on the other have been easily joined to Africa by an isthmus, where it is now divided from it by a strait, and so have formed with it one connected continent; in the same way as Australia is united with Asia, if at least we consider the long chain of islands between them as one unbroken continuity. Then in truth there would have been but three continents of a form similar to the above-mentioned one of America; except that the two nobler continents closely entangled with one another would not on that account have so well preserved the original conformation. That it is on the whole more correct, and more consonant with nature, as well as with theory, to suppose the existence of only three original portions of the globe, might be shown by much additional evidence.

But, laying aside these geological facts and observations, ideas and conjectures, the philosophic historian can reckon over the whole surface of the globe but fifteen historical and important civilised countries of greater or less extent, which can form the subject and furnish the geographical outline of

his remarks. This historical chain of lands, or this stream of historical nations from the south-east of Asia to the northern and western extremities of Europe, forms a tract, through both continents, which though of considerable breadth, is not, in proportion to the extent of these continents, of very great magnitude, and which may be divided into three classes, coinciding chronologically in their several periods of historical glory and development with the great eras or sections of universal history from the primitive ages down to the present times. In the first class of these mighty and celebrated civilised countries, I would place the three great magnificent regions in Eastern and Southern Asia, China, India, between which the ancient Bactriana forms a point of transition and connecting link—and lastly Persia. In a more westerly and somewhat more northerly direction than the three countries just named, the second or middle class is composed of four or five regions remarkable for extent and beauty, and above all for their historical importance and celebrity. First of all, there is that middle country of Western Asia, above-mentioned, which is situate near two great streams—the Tigris and the Euphrates, and bounded by four inland seas, the Persian and Arabian gulfs, and the Caspian and Mediterranean seas. Upon this midland country of ancient history, in every respect so worthy of notice, I have but one observation to add, that in this great series of civilised countries it occupies nearly the middle place; for the southern extremity of India is about as far removed from it, as in the opposite direction, the north of Scotland. And the eastern part of China is not much more distant from this region, than in the opposite quarter the western coast of the Hesperian Peninsula. Next must be included in this class the circumjacent countries, Arabia, Egypt, and Asia Minor, together with the Caucasian regions.

As in the flourishing period of her ancient history, Greece was in every way far more closely connected with Asia Minor, Phœnicia and Egypt, than with the countries of Europe, she also must be comprised in this division of Central Asia. On the other hand, there is no country in Europe which, considered in itself, bears so strongly the distinctive geographical configuration peculiar to the European continent. This peculiar configuration of Europe, so well adapted to the purposes of settlement, and to the progress of civilisation, consists in

this—that in no other continent does the same given space of territory present to the sea so extensive and diversified a line of coast, and furnish it with so many streams, great and small, as Europe, shut in as it is, between two inland seas, and the great ocean, and which runs out into so many great and commodiously situated peninsulas, and possesses large, magnificent, and in part, very anciently and highly civilised islands, like Sicily and the British Isles. What Europe is in a large way, Greece is in a small—a region of coasts, islands, and peninsulas. Belonging more to one continent in its natural conformation, and to the other by its historical connexion, Greece forms the point of transition and the intermediate link between Asia and Europe.

The other six or seven principal countries in Europe, taken according to a strict geographical classification, and without paying attention to the political variations of territory, whether in antiquity, the middle ages, or modern times, form the members of the third class. These are, first the two beautiful peninsulas, Italy and Spain ; next France on the north and south washed by two different seas, and towards the north, jutting out into a by-no-means inconsiderable peninsula—further on, the British Isles, the ancient Germany with its northern coast stretching along two seas, to which must be annexed from the ancient consanguinity of their inhabitants, the Cimbric and Scandinavian islands and peninsulas ; lastly, the vast Sarmatia, towards the north and east extending far into Asia, in the wide tract from the Euxine to the Frozen Sea. From Sarmatia, however, must be separated, on account of their natural situation, the great Danubian countries, extending from the south of the Carpathian Mountains, down to the other mountainous chain northward of Greece—such as the ancient Illyricum, Pannonia, and Dacia—regions which, in a strict geographical point of view, must be regarded as forming a distinct class. In an historical point of view, the whole northern coast of Africa, stretching along the Mediterranean, should be included in this division of European countries, not only from that early commercial and colonial connexion, established in the time of the Carthaginian republic, and in the first period of the Roman wars and conquests ; but from the prevalence in that country, down to the fourth and fifth centuries, of European manners, language, and refinement.



Even during the existence of the Saracenic empire, a very close intercourse subsisted for many centuries between this coast and Spain.

Such, according to a general geographical survey of the globe, would be the historical land-chart of civilisation, if I may so express myself, which forms the grand outline I must steadily keep in view, in the following sketch of nations, in which I will endeavour to explain with the utmost clearness and precision, and point out closely in all its particular bearings, the principle laid down in this work respecting the internal Word, as the essential characteristic of man.

END OF LECTURE II.

## LECTURE III.

Of the Constitution of the Chinese Empire—the moral and political Condition of China—the Character of Chinese Intellect and Chinese Science.

“MAN and the earth,”—this has been the subject of our previous disquisitions, and might serve as the superscription to this first portion of the work. In the second part, comprised in the four or five following lectures, the subject discussed is sacred tradition, according to the peculiar form which it assumed among each of the great and most remarkable nations in primitive antiquity, and as it is known from the visible and universally scattered traces of a divine revelation. It will be our duty to trace, with a discriminating eye, the various course which, in the lapse of ages, this sacred tradition followed among each of those nations ; and at the same time to point out, as far as the subject will admit of historical proof, the one common source whence, as from a centre, issued those different streams of tradition to diffuse throughout all the regions of the earth fertility and life, or to be lost and dried up in the sterile sands of human error. It will be also our task more accurately to define the share allotted to each of these leading nations in divine truth, or the heritage of higher knowledge which had been imparted to them. Closely connected with this subject, is the designation of the internal Word, constituting as it does the distinguishing mark and intellectual being of man and mankind ; and which, as it has been variously manifested and developed in the language, writings, Sagas, history, art, and science—in the faith, the life, and modes of thinking of each of those nations, will be described in its most essential traits.

I shall commence with the Chinese Empire, because, among the fifteen historical countries included in the line of civilisation we have drawn above, it occupies the extreme point of Eastern Asia. The names of east and west are indeed purely relative ; and have not the same permanent and definite signi-

fiction as the North or South Pole in every portion of the globe. China lies to the west of Peru ; and to North America, or Brazil, Europe forms the east or north-east point. We still, however, adhere to common speech, purely relative as it is, and take our point of view from this Asiatic and European hemisphere, in which we dwell. If we would extend in a westerly direction and to the great continent of America, which is more and more assuming an important place in the history of the world, that series of great and civilised states, stretching from the south-east to the north-west in our mightier, more celebrated, and earlier civilised hemisphere, we might add to the before-mentioned fifteen ancient and modern countries three young or rising states in the new world, which, springing in a three-fold division from British, Spanish, and Portuguese extraction, would constitute the most recent, or last historical links in this chain of communities.

The Chinese Empire is the largest of all the monarchies now existing on the earth, and even in this respect may well challenge the attention of the historical inquirer. This empire is not absolutely the greatest in territorial extent, though even in this respect it is scarcely inferior to the greatest ; but in point of population it is in all probability the first. Spain, if we could now include in the number of her possessions her American colonies, would exceed all empires in extent. The same may be said of Russia, with her annexed colonies, and boundless provinces in the north of Asia. But, great as the population of this empire may be, when considered in itself and relatively to the other European states, it can sustain no comparison with that of China. England with the East Indies and her colonial possessions in the three divisions of the globe, Polynesia, Africa, and America, has indeed a very wide extent, and, perhaps, when we include the hundred and ten millions that own her sway in India, comes the nearest in point of population to China. Of the amount of the Chinese population, which is not with certainty known, that of India may furnish a criterion for a conjectural and probable estimate. The British ambassador, Lord Macartney, received an official document, in which the whole population of China was computed at the monstrous amount of 330 millions. Even if the Chinese possessed those exact statistical estimates we have in Europe, it would still be a matter of doubt how far in such cases we could



confide in their veracity, especially in their relations with foreigners, and Europeans. In another and somewhat earlier statistical work, composed towards the close of the 18th century, the population of this empire is estimated at 147 millions; and the very incredible statement is added, that a hundred and fifty years before, or about the middle of the 17th century, the Chinese population amounted only to 27 millions and a half. This rapid rise, or rather this prodigious stride in the numbers of a people, would be in utter opposition to all principles and observations on the growth and progressive increase of population, even in the most civilised countries. Thus even the statistical estimates of the Chinese furnish us with no certain information on this subject. However, as this vast region is everywhere intersected by navigable rivers and canals, everywhere studded with large and highly-populous cities, and enjoys a climate as genial, or even still more genial, and certainly far more salubrious than that of India; as, like the latter country, it everywhere presents to the eye the richest culture, and is in all appearance as much peopled, or over-peopled, we may take India, whose total population is not near included in the 110 millions under British rule, as furnishing a pretty accurate standard for the computation of the Chinese population. Now, when we reflect that even the proper China is larger than the whole western peninsula of India, and that the vast countries dependent on China, such as Thibet and Southern Tartary are very populous, the conjectural calculation of the English writer, from whom I have taken these critical remarks on the early estimates of Chinese population, and who reckons it at 150 millions, may be regarded as a very moderate computation, and may with perfect safety, be considerably raised. Thus, then, the Chinese population is nearly as large as the whole population of Europe, and constitutes, if not a fourth, at least a fifth, of the total population of the globe.

I permit myself to indulge in cursory comparisons of this kind, and for the reason that the history of civilisation, which forms the basis, and, as it were, the outward body, of the philosophy of history, which should be the inner and higher sense of the whole, is deeply interested in all that refers to the general condition of humanity. And such an interest, which does not of itself lie in mere statistical calculations, but in the

outward condition of mankind, as the symbol of its inward state, may very well attach to comparisons of this nature.

The interest, however, which the philosophic historian should take in all that relates to humanity in general, and to the various nations of the earth, ought not to be regulated by the false standard of an indiscriminate equality, that would consider all nations of equal importance, and pay equal attention to all without distinction. This would, indeed, betray an indifference to, or at least ignorance of, the higher principle implanted in the human breast. But this interest should be measured not merely by the degree of population in a state, or by geographical extent of territory, or by external power, but by population, territory, and power combined—by moral worth and intellectual pre-eminence, by the scale of civilisation to which the nation has attained. The Tongoosses, though a very widely-diffused race, the Calmucks though, compared with the other nations of Central Asia, they have much to claim our attention, cannot certainly excite equal interest, or hold as high a place in the history of human civilisation as the Greeks or the Egyptians; though the territory of Egypt itself is certainly not particularly large nor, according to our customary standard of population, were its inhabitants in all probability ever very numerous. In the same way the empire of the Moguls, which embraced China itself, has not the same high interest and importance in our eyes, as the Roman Empire either in its rise or in its fall. Writers on universal history have not however always avoided this fault, and have been too much disposed to place all nations on the same historical footing—on the false level of an indiscriminate equality; and to regard humanity in a mere physical point of view, and according to the natural classification of tribes and races. In these sketches of history, the high and the noble is often ranked with the low and the vulgar, and neither what is truly great, nor what is of lesser importance (for this, too, should not be overlooked), has its due place in these portraits of mankind.

A numerous, or even successive population is undoubtedly an essential element of political power in a state; but it is not the only, nor in any respect, the principal symptom or indication of the civilisation of a country. It is only in regard to civilisation that the population of China deserves our consi-

deration. Although in these latter times, when Europe, by her political ascendancy over the other parts of the world, has proved the high pre-eminence of her arts and civilisation; England and Russia have become the immediate neighbours of China towards the north and west; still these territorial relations affect not the rest of Europe; and China, when we leave out of consideration its very important commerce, cannot certainly be accounted a political power in the general system. Even in ancient, as well as in modern times, China never figured in the history of Western Asia or Europe, and had no connexion whatever with their inhabitants; but this great country has ever stood apart, like a world within itself, in the remote, unknown Eastern Asia. Hence the earlier writers on universal history have taken little or no notice of this great empire, shut out as it was from the confined horizon of their views. And this was natural, when we consider that the conquests and expeditions of the Asiatic nations were considered by these writers as subjects of the greatest weight and importance. No conquerors have ever marched from China into Western Asia, like Xerxes, for instance, who passed from the interior of Persia to Athens; or like Alexander the Great, who extended his victorious march from his small paternal province of Macedon, to beyond the Indus, and almost to the borders of the Ganges, though the latter river, he was, in despite of all his efforts, unable to reach. But the great victorious expeditions have proceeded not from China, but from Central Asia, and the nations of Tartary, who have invaded China itself; though in these invasions the manners, mind, and civilisation of the Chinese have evinced their power, as their Tartar conquerors, in the earliest as in the latest times, have, after a few generations, invariably conformed to the manners and civilisation of the conquered nation and become more or less Chinese.

Not only the great population and flourishing agriculture of this fruitful country, but the cultivation of silk, for which it has been celebrated from all antiquity; the culture of the tea-plant, which forms such an important article of European trade; as well as the knowledge of several most useful medicinal productions of nature; and unique and, in their way, excellent products of industry and manufacture; prove the very high degree of civilisation which this people has attained to. And how should not that people be entitled to a high or one of the highest places



among civilised nations, which had known, many centuries before Europe, the art of printing, gunpowder, and the magnet—those three so highly celebrated and valuable discoveries of European skill? Instead of the regular art of printing with transposeable letters, which would not suit the Chinese system of writing, this people make use of a species of lithography, which, to all essential purposes is the same, and attended with the same effects. Gunpowder served in China, as it did in Europe in the infancy of the discovery, rather for amusement and for fireworks, than for the more serious purpose of warlike fortification and conquest: and though this people are acquainted with the magnetic needle, they have never made a like extended application of its powers, and never employ it either in a confined river and coasting navigation, or on the wide ocean, on which they never venture.

The Chinese are remarkable, too, for the utmost polish and refinement of manners, and even for a fastidious urbanity and a love of stately ceremonial. In many respects, indeed, their politeness and refinement almost equal those of European nations, or at least are very superior to what we usually designate by the term of Oriental manners—a term which in our sense can apply only to the more contiguous Mahometan countries of the Levant. Of this assertion we may find a sufficient proof in any single tale that pourtrays the present Chinese life and manners, in the novel, for instance, translated by M. Remusat.\* In their present manners, and fashions, however, there are many things utterly at variance with European taste and feelings: I need only mention the custom of the dignitaries, functionaries, and men of letters, of letting their nails grow to the length of birds' claws, and that other custom in women of rank, of compressing their feet to a most artificial diminutiveness. Both customs, according to the recent account of a very intelligent Englishman, serve to mark and distinguish the upper class; for the former renders the men totally incapable of hard or manual labour, and the latter impedes the women of rank in walking, or at least gives them a mincing gait, and a languid, delicate, and interesting air. These minute traits of manners should not be overlooked in the general sketch of this nation, for they perfectly correspond to many other characteristic marks and

\* Entitled *Ju-Kiao-li*, or the Cousins.

indications of unnatural stiffness, childish vanity, and exaggerated refinement, which we meet with in the more important province of its intellectual exertions. Even in the basis of all intellectual culture, the language, or rather the writing of the Chinese, this character of refinement pushed beyond all bounds and all conception is visible, while on the other hand it is coupled with great intellectual poverty and jejuneness. In a language where there are not much more than 300, not near 400, and (according to the most recent critical investigation), only 272 monosyllabic primitive roots without any kind of grammar ; where the not merely various, but utterly unconnected, significations of one and the same word are marked, in the first place, by a varying modulation of the voice, according to a four-fold method of accentuation ; in the next place, and chiefly by the written characters, which amount to the prodigious number of 80,000 ; while the Egyptian hieroglyphs do not exceed the number of 800 ; and this Chinese system of writing is the most artificial in the whole world. An inference which is not invalidated by the fact that, out of that great number of all actual or possible written characters, but a fourth part perhaps is really in use, and a still less portion is necessary to be learned. As the meaning, especially of more complex notions and abstract ideas, can be fully fixed and accurately determined only by such artificial ciphers ; the language is far more dependent on these written characters than on living sound ; for one and the same sound may often be designated by 160 different characters, and have as many significations. It not rarely occurs that Chinese, when they do not very well understand each other in conversation, have recourse to writing, and by copying down these ciphers are enabled to divine each other's meaning, and become mutually intelligible. To comprehend rightly this immeasurable chaos of originally symbolic, but now merely conventional signs—in other words, to be able to read and write, though this science involves great and difficult problems even for the most practised, constitutes the real subject and purport of the scientific education of a Chinese. Indeed it furnishes labour sufficient to fill up the life of man, for even the European scholars, who have engaged in this study, find it a matter of no small difficulty to devise a system whereby a dictionary, or rather a systematic catalogue of all these written characters may be composed, to serve as a fit guide on this ocean of Chinese signs.

But we shall have again occasion to recur to this subject; and indeed it is only in connexion with the peculiar bearings of the Chinese mind this writing system can be properly explained and understood in its true meaning, or rather its meaningless construction and elaborateness.

Of the external civilisation of China, we have a striking proof and a standing monument in the construction of so many canals that intersect the whole country, and in every thing connected therewith. As the extraordinary fertility of the soil is produced by the many rivers of greater or less magnitude that intersect the country, but which at the same time threaten the flat plains with inundation, it is the first object and most important care of government, to avert the danger of such inundations, to distribute the fertilising waters in equal abundance over the whole country, and thus, by means of canals, to maintain in all parts the communication by water, which is at the same time of equal benefit and importance to industry and internal commerce. In no civilised state are establishments of this kind so extensively diffused and brought to so high a state of perfection as in China. The great imperial canal, which extends to the length of 120 geographical leagues, has, it is said, no parallel on the earth. Although the construction of canals, and all the regulations on water-carriage could have attained by degrees only to their present state of perfection, still this alone would prove the very early attention which this people had bestowed on the arts of civilised life. Mention is often made of them in the old Chinese histories and imperial annals; and the canals of China, like the Nile in Egypt, were ever the objects of most anxious solicitude to the government. These annals, whenever they have occasion to speak of those great inundations and destructive floods, which are of such frequent occurrence in Chinese history, invariably represent the attention bestowed on water-courses, and water regulations, as the most certain mark of a wise, benevolent, and provident administration. On the other hand, the neglect of this most important of administrative concerns is ever regarded as the proof of a wicked, reckless, and unfortunate reign; and in these histories some great calamity, or even violent catastrophe, is sure to follow, like a stroke of divine vengeance, on this unpardonable neglect of duty. Together with the imperial canal, the great Chinese wall, which extends on the northern frontier of China proper, to the



length of 150 geographical leagues, is another no less important, and still standing monument of the comparatively high civilisation which this country had very early attained. Such is the height and thickness of this wall, that it has been calculated that its cubic contents exceed all the mass of stone employed in all the buildings in England and Scotland; or again, that the same materials would serve to construct a wall of ordinary height and moderate thickness round the whole earth. This great wall of China may be considered as a characteristic, and as it were a symbol of the exclusive spirit and aversion to every thing foreign in person, manners, and modes of thinking, which distinguish the Chinese state. This spirit, however, has been as little able as the great wall itself, to defend China against foreign conquests, or even against the introduction of foreign sects. This wall, which was built about two centuries before the Christian era, is an historical monument, which furnishes far stronger proof than all the dubious accounts of the old annals, that even in ancient times, and long before the conquests of the Monguls, and the establishment of the present dynasty of Mantchou Tartars, the empire had been often conquered, or at least was constantly exposed to the invasions of the Tartar tribes of the north.

The long succession of the different native dynasties of China, Tchín, Han, Tang, and Sung, down to the Monguls, which fills the diffuse annals of the empire, furnishes few important data on the intellectual progress of the Chinese; and every thing of importance to the object of our present inquiries, that can be gathered out of the mass of political history, may be reduced to a very few plain facts. The English writer, whom we have already cited, though otherwise inclined to a certain degree of scepticism in his views, fixes the commencement of the historical history in the ancient dynasty of Chow, eleven hundred years before the Christian era. The first fact of importance, as regards the moral and intellectual civilisation of China, is that this country was originally divided into many small principalities, and, under petty sovereigns, whose power was more limited, enjoyed a greater share of liberty: and that it was formed into a great and absolute monarchy only two hundred years before Christ. The general burning of the books, of which more particular mention will be presently made, as well as the erection of the great wall, are attributed to the first general Emperor of

all China, Chi-hoangti ; in whose reign, too, Japan became a Chinese colony, or received from China a political establishment. At a still later period, as in the fifth century of our era, and again at the time of the Mogul conquest under Zingis Khan, China was divided into two kingdoms, a northern and a southern. But there is another fact already mentioned that throws still stronger light on the high civilisation of China—it is, that at every period, when this empire has been conquered by the Moguls and Tartars, the conquerors, overcome in their turn by the ascendancy of Chinese civilisation, have, within a short time, invariably adopted the manners, laws, and even language of China, and thus its institutions have remained, on the whole, unaltered. But here is a circumstance in Chinese history particularly worthy of our attention. In no state in the world do we see such an entire, absolute, and rigid monarchical unity as in that of China, especially under its ancient form ; although this government is more limited by laws and manners, and is by no means of that arbitrary and despotic character which we are wont to attribute to the more modern Oriental states. In China, before the introduction of the Indian religion of Buddha, there was not even a distinct sacerdotal class—there is no nobility, no hereditary class with hereditary rights—education, and employment in the service of the state, form the only marks of distinction ; and the men of letters and government functionaries are blended together in the single class of Mandarins ; but the state is all in all. However, this absolute monarchical system has not conduced to the peace, stability, and permanent prosperity of the state, for the whole history of China, from beginning to end, displays one continued series of seditions, usurpations, anarchy, changes of dynasty, and other violent revolutions and catastrophes. This is proved by the bare statement of facts, though the official language of the imperial annals ever concedes the final triumph to the monarchical principle.

The same violent revolutions occurred in the department of science and of public doctrines, as in the instance already cited of the general burning of the books by order of the first general emperor ; when the men of letters, or at least a party of them, were persecuted, and 460 followers of Confucius burnt. This act of tyranny undoubtedly supposes a very violent contest between factions—an important political struggle between hostile

sects, and a mighty revolution in the intellectual world. At the same time, too, a favourite of this tyrannical prince introduced a new system of writing, which has led to the greatest confusion even in subsequent ages. Such an intellectual revolution is doubtless evident on the introduction of the Indian religion of Buddha, or Fo (according to the Chinese appellation), which took place precisely three-and-thirty years after the foundation of Christianity. The conquest of China by the Moguls, under Zingis Khan, occurred at the same time that their expeditions towards the opposite quarter of Europe spread terror and desolation over Russia and Poland, as far as the confines of Silesia. This conquest produced a re-action, and a popular revolution, conducted by a common citizen of China, by name Chow, restored the empire ; this citizen afterwards ascended the throne, and became the founder of a new Chinese dynasty. The emperors of the present dynasty of Mantchou Tartars, that has now governed China since the middle of the 17th century, are distinguished for their attachment to the old customs and institutions of China, and even to its language and science ; and their elevation to the throne has given rise to many great scientific enterprises, and has been singularly favourable to the investigation of those European scholars whose object it is to make us better acquainted with China. But at the moment I am speaking, a great rebellion has broken out in the northern part of the kingdom, and in the opposite extremity the Christians are exposed to a more than ordinary persecution.

These few leading incidents in Chinese history may suffice to make known the principal epochs in the intellectual progress and civilisation of this people. As the constitution and development of the human mind are in each of those ancient nations closely connected with the nature of their language, and even sometimes (as in the case of the Chinese) with their system of writing, the language of the latter people, being, on account of its amazing copiousness, less fit for conversation than for writing, I shall now make a few remarks on the very artificial mode of Chinese writing, which is perfectly unique in its kind ; but I shall confine my observations to its general character, and shall forbear entering into the vast labyrinth of the 80,000 cipher-signs of speech, and all the problems and difficulties which they involve. The Chinese writing was undoubtedly in its origin symbolical ; though the rude marks of those primitive symbols can now scarcely be



discerned in the enigmatical abbreviations, and in the complex combinations of the characters at present in use. It is no slight problem, even for the learned of China, to reduce with any degree of certainty the boundless quantity of their written characters to their simple elements and primitive roots ; in this, however, they have succeeded, and have shown that all these elements are to be found in the 214 symbols, or keys of writing, as they call them. The Chinese characters of the primitive ages comprise only such representations indicated by a few rude strokes, of those first simple objects which surround man while living in the most simple state of society—such as the sun and the moon, the most familiar animals, the common plants, the instruments of human labour, weapons, and the different parts of human dwellings. This is the same rude symbolical writing which we find among other uncivilised nations, the Americans, for example, and among these, the Mexicans in particular.

The celebrated French orientalist, Abel Remusat, who in our times has infused a new life into the study of Chinese literature, and especially thrown on the whole subject a much greater degree of clearness than originally belonged to it, has, in his examination of this first very meagre outline of the infant civilisation of China, wherein he discovers the then very contracted circle of Chinese ideas, passed many intellectual observations, and drawn many historical deductions. And if, as he conjectures, the discovery of Chinese writing must date its origin from four thousand years back, this would bring it within three or four generations from the Deluge, according to vulgar era—an estimate which certainly is not exaggerated. If this European scholar, intimately conversant as he is with Chinese antiquities and science, is at a loss adequately to describe his astonishment at the extreme poverty of these first symbols of Chinese writing, so no one, doubtless, possesses in a higher degree than himself all the necessary attainments to enable him to appreciate the immeasurable distance between this first extreme jejuneness of ideas, and the boundless wealth displayed in the later, artificial, and complex writing of the Chinese.

But when, among other things, he calls our attention to the fact that, in this primitive writing, even the sign or symbol of a priest is wanting—a symbol which together with the class itself must exist among the very rudest nations—I cannot

concur in the truth of the remark; for he himself adduces, among other characters, one which must represent a magician. Now among the heathen nations of the primitive age, the one personage was certainly identical with the other, as even among the Cainites was very probably the case. Even the combination of several of those simple characters, which generally serves to denote the more abstract ideas, seems often, or at least originally, not to have been regulated by any profound principle of symbolism, but to have arisen merely out of the vulgar perceptions or impressions of every-day life. For instance, the character denoting happiness is composed of two signs, of which one represents an open mouth, and the other a hand full of rice, or rice by itself. Here we see no allusion is made to any very lofty or chimerical idea of happiness, or to any mystic or spiritual conception of the same subject; but, as this written-character well evinces, the Chinese notion of happiness is simply represented by a mouth filled and saturated with good rice. Another example of nearly the same kind is given by Remusat with something of shyness and reserve;—the character designating woman, when doubled, signifies strife and contention, and when tripled, immoral and disorderly conduct. How widely removed are all these coarse and trivial combinations of ideas from an exquisite sense—a deep symbolism of Nature—from those spiritual emblems in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, so far as they have been deciphered; although these emblems may have been, and were in fact applied to the purpose of alphabetic usage. In the hieroglyphics there is, besides the bare literal meaning, a high symbolical inspiration, like a soul of life—like the breathing of a high in-dwelling spirit—a deeply felt significancy—a lofty and beautiful design apparent through the dead character denoting any particular name or fact.\*

But independently of this boundless chaos of written-characters, the Chinese undoubtedly possess a system of scientific symbols, and symbolical signs, which constitute the purport of the most ancient of their sacred books—the I—King—which signifies the book of unity, or, as others explain it, the book of

\* There are some exceptions to the truth of these remarks respecting Chinese symbols. For instance, the idea of “dispersion” is expressed in the Chinese writing by the sign of *a tower*. What a beautiful and profound allusion to the great events of primitive history.—*Trans.*

changes; and either name will agree with the meaning of those symbols which, when rightly understood, and conceived in the spirit of early antiquity, will appear to be of a very remarkable and scientific nature. There are only two primary figures or lines, from which proceed originally the four symbols and the eight koua or combinations representing nature, which form the basis of the high Chinese philosophy. These first two primary principles are a straight, unbroken line, and a line broken or divided into two. If these first simple elements are doubled; namely—two straight lines put under each other like our arithmetical sign of equation, and two broken or divided lines also put together, the different lines are formed. According as one broken line occupies the upper or the lower place, there are two possible variations—when put together, there are four possible variations; and these constitute the four symbols. But if three lines of these two kinds, the straight and the broken, are united or placed under each other, so, according to the number of the upper, middle, or lower place of either species of line, there are eight possible combinations, and these are the eight koua, which, together with the four symbols, refer to the natural elements, and to the primary principles of all things, and serve as the symbolical expression, or scientific designation, of these.

What is now the real sense and the proper signification of those scientific primary lines among the Chinese, which exert an influence over the whole of their ancient literature, and upon which they themselves have written an incredible number of learned commentaries? Leibnitz supposed them to contain a reference to the modern algebraical discoveries, and especially to the binary calculation. Other writers, especially among the English, drawing their observations more from real life, remark, on the other hand, that this ancient system of mystical lines serves at present the purpose of a sort of oracular play of questions, like the turning up of cards among Europeans, and is converted to many superstitious uses, especially for making pretended discoveries in alchymy, to which the Chinese are very much addicted. But this is only an abuse of modern times, which no longer understand this primitive system of symbolical signs and lines. The high antiquity of these lines, and of the eight koua can be the less a matter of doubt as even mythology has ascribed them to the primitive Patriarch



of the Chinese—Fohi, who is represented as having espied these lines on the back of a tortoise, and having thence deduced the written characters, which many of the learned Chinese wish to derive from these eight koua or combinations of the first symbolical lines. But the French scholar, whom I have more than once had occasion to name, and who is well able to form a competent opinion on the subject, is most decidedly opposed to this Chinese derivation of all the written characters from the eight koua; and it would appear, indeed, that the latter differ totally from the common system of Chinese writing, and must be looked upon as of a distinct scientific nature.

Perhaps we may find a natural explanation of the true, and not very hidden sense of these signs, by comparing the fundamental doctrines in the elder Greek philosophy and science of nature. Thus, in the writings of Plato, mention is often made of the one and of the other, or of unity and duality, as the original elements of nature and first principles of all existence. By this is meant the doctrine of the first opposition, and of the many oppositions derived from the first; and also of the possible, and conceivable, or required adjustment and compromise between the two, and of the restoration of the first unity and eternal equality anterior to all opposition, and which terminates and absorbs in itself all discord. Thus these eight koua, and mathematical signs or symbolical lines of ancient China, would comprise nothing more than a dry outline of all dynamical speculation and science. And it is therefore quite consistent that the old sacred book which contains these principles of Chinese science should be termed either the book of unity, or the book of changes; for doubtless this title refers to the doctrine of an absolute unity, as the fundamental principle of all things, and to the doctrine of differences, or oppositions or changes springing out of that first unity. This doctrine of an opposition in all things—in thought as in nature—will become more apparent if we reflect on the new and brilliant discoveries in natural philosophy. For as in this science, the oxygen and hydrogen parts in the chemistry of metals, or the positive and negative end of electrical phenomena, in the attracting and repelling pole of magnetism, reveal such an opposition and dynamic play of living powers in nature; so in this philosophy of China, the abstract

doctrine of this opposition and dynamical change of existence seems to be laid down with a sort of mathematical generality, as the basis of all future science. In our higher natural philosophy, indeed, all this has been proved from facts and experience ; and, besides this, dynamic life forms but the one element, and the one branch of the science to be acquired ; and a philosophy founded entirely on this dynamical law of existence, without any regard to the other and higher principle of internal experience and moral life, intellectual intuition and divine revelation, would be at best a very partial system, and by no means of general application ; or if a general application of such a system were made, it must lead to endless mistakes, errors, and contradictions. That such a system of dynamical speculation and science, if extended to objects where it cannot be corroborated by facts—to all things divine and human, real, possible, or impossible, will undoubtedly lead to such a chaotic confusion of ideas ; we have had a memorable experience in the German “ Philosophy of Nature ” of the last generation ;\* a philosophy which consisted in a fanciful play of thought with *Polarities, and oppositions, and points of indifference between them*, but which has been long appreciated in its true worth and real nature, and consigned to its proper limits.

Thus this outline of the old Chinese symbols of thought, which have a purely metaphysical import, would lay before us the most recent error clothed in the most antique form—but the Chinese system is in itself very remarkable and important. The fundamental text of the old sacred book on this doctrine of unity and oppositions, and which may now be easily comprehended, runs thus, according to Remusat’s literal translation : “ The great first Principle has engendered or produced two equations and differences, or primary rules of existence ; but the two primary rules or two oppositions, namely Yn and Yang, or repose and motion (the affirmative and negative as we might otherwise call them) have produced four signs or symbols ; and the four symbols have produced the eight koua, or further

\* The author alludes to Schelling’s philosophy, which is called sometimes the “ Philosophy of Nature,” and sometimes the “ Philosophy of Identity.” M. Cuvier, in his masterly introduction to his great work on Fossile Remains, mentions some of the extravagant theories broached in the department of geology alone by those German naturalists, who some years ago attempted to apply to natural philosophy, the metaphysical system of Schelling.—*Trans.*

combinations." These eight koua are kien or ether, kui or pure water, li or pure fire, tchin or thunder, siun, the wind, kan, common water, ken, a mountain, and kuen, the earth.

On this ancient basis of Chinese philosophy, proceeding from indifference to differences, was afterwards founded the rationalist system of Lao-tseu, whose name occurs somewhat earlier than that of Confucius. The Taosse, or disciples of Reason, as the followers of this philosopher entitle themselves, have very much degenerated, and have become a complete atheistical sect; though the guilt of this must be attributed, not to the founder, but to his disciples only. It is, however, acknowledged that the atheistical principles of this dead science of reason, have been very widely diffused throughout the Chinese empire, and for a certain period were almost generally prevalent.

As it is necessary to keep in view a certain chronological order, in our investigations of the progressive development of Chinese intellect, I may here observe that, as far as European research has been able to ascertain, we may distinguish three principal and successive epochs in the history both of the religion and science of China. The first epoch is that of sacred tradition, and of the old constitution of the Chinese empire, and discloses those primitive views, and that primitive system of ethics, on which the empire was founded. The second, which we may fix about six centuries before our era, is the period of scientific philosophy, that pursued two opposite paths of inquiry. Confucius applied his attention entirely to the more practical study of ethics, with which, indeed, the old constitution, history, and sacred traditions of the Chinese were very intimately connected; and the pure morality of Confucius, which was the first branch of Chinese philosophy known in Europe, excited to a high degree the enthusiasm of many European scholars, who, by their too exclusive admiration, were prevented from forming a right estimate of the general character of Chinese philosophy.

Another system of philosophy, purely speculative and widely different from the practical and ethical doctrine of Confucius, was the system of Lao-tseu and his school, whence issued the above-mentioned rationalist sect of Taosse that has at last fallen into atheism. As to the question whether Lao-tseu travelled into the remote West, or in case he came only as far as Western Asia, whether he derived his system from the Persian or Egyptian doctrines or mediately from the Greek philosophy—this



question I shall not here stop to discuss ; for the matter is very doubtful in itself, and, were it even proved, still all the doctrines borrowed from the West were invested in a form purely Chinese, and clothed in quite a native garb. Those signs in the I—King, we have already spoken of, evidently comprise the germ of such an absolute, negative, and consequently atheistic rationalism—a mechanical play of idle abstractions. The third epoch in the progress of Chinese opinions is formed by the introduction of the Indian religion of Buddha or of Fo. The great revolution which had previously occurred in the old doctrines and manners of China, and the ruling spirit of that false and absolute rationalism, had already paved the way for the foreign religion of Buddha, which of all the Pagan imitations of truth, occupies the lowest grade.

The old sacred traditions of the Chinese are not so overlaid nor disfigured with fictions, as those of most other Asiatic nations ; those of the Indians, for example, and of the early nations of Pagan Europe ; but their traditions breathe the purer spirit of genuine history. Hence the poetry of the Chinese is not mythological, like that of other nations ; but is either lyrical (as in the Shi—King, a book of sacred songs, composed or compiled by Confucius) ; or is entirely confined to the representation of real life, and of the social relations (as in the modern tales and novels, several of which have been translated into the European languages).

The old traditions of the Chinese have many traits of a kindred character with, or at least of a strong resemblance to, the Mosaic revelation, and even to the sacred traditions of the nations of Western Asia, particularly the Persians ; and in these traditions we find much that either corroborates the testimony of Holy Writ, or at least affords matter for further comparison. We have before mentioned the very peculiar manner in which the Chinese speak of the great Flood, and how their first progenitors struggled against the savage waters, and how this task was afterwards neglected by bad or improvident rulers, who, in consequence of this neglect, were brought to ruin.

I will cite but one instance, where the parallel is indeed remarkable. In the I—King, mention is made of the fallen dragon, or of the spirit of the dragon that, for his presumption in wishing to ascend to heaven, was precipitated into the

abyss ; and the words in which this event is described are precisely the same, or at least very similar, to those which our Scriptures apply to the rebel angel, and the Persian books to Ahriman. However this dragon is whimsically, we might almost say, artlessly, made the sacred symbol of the Chinese empire and emperor. The paternal power of the latter is understood in a much too absolute sense : not only is the emperor styled the lord of heaven and earth, and even the son of God ; but his will is revered as the will of God, or rather completely identified with it ; and even the most determined eulogists of the Chinese constitution and manners cannot deny that the monarch is almost the object of a real worship. Christianity teaches that all power is from God ; but it does not thereby declare that all power is one and the same with God. Even a dominion over nature and her powers is ascribed to the Emperor of China, as the illustrious lord of heaven and earth.

Moreover, no hereditary nobility, no classes separated by distinctions of birth, exist in this country, as in India. The emperor, half identified with the Deity, had alone the privilege in ancient times of offering on the sacred heights the great sacrifice to God. Some European writers have, from this circumstance, conceived the Chinese constitution to be theocratic ; but if it be so, it is only in its outward form, or original mould ; for it would be difficult to show in it any trace of a true, vital theocracy. All that pomp of sacred ceremony and religious titles so strangely abused, forms a striking contrast with real history, and with that long succession of profligate and unfortunate reigns and perpetual revolutions which fill most of the pages of the Chinese annals. We should err greatly were we to regard all these high imperial titles as the mere swell and exaggeration of Eastern phraseology. The Chinese speak of their celestial Empire of the Medium, as they call their country, in terms which no European writer would apply to a Christian state, and such indeed as the Scriptures and religious authors use in reference only to the kingdom of God. They cannot conceive it possible for the earth to contain two emperors at one and the same time, and own the sway of more than one such absolute lord and master. Hence they look on every solemn foreign embassy as a debt of homage ; nor is this sentiment the idle effect of vanity, or

fancy—it is a firm and settled belief, perfectly coinciding with the whole system of their religious and political doctrines. This political idolatry of the state, which the Chinese identify with the emperor's person, is a pagan error: all excess, all exaggeration is sure to produce opposition and reaction, or a tendency thereto. Hence the pages of Chinese history present by the side of this high boasted ideal of absolute power, as a fearful concomitant, and fitting commentary, one continuous series of political revolutions and catastrophes. Neither the pure morality of those ancient books revered by the Chinese as sacred, whatever be the morality of books in which the principle of rationalism is so exclusively predominant; nor all the high refinement of philosophic speculation in the scientific period of their history, have prevented this people from falling into the grossest of idolatries, and adopting a foreign superstition, which of all false religions is unquestionably the most reprehensible. Some persons have sought to trace a certain resemblance to Christianity in this religion of Fo, partly on account of some external institutions, and partly on account of the fundamental principle of the incarnation, equally perverted and misapplied in this superstition, as in the rival mythology of Brahma. The enemies of Christianity, since the time of Voltaire, have not failed, at the name of Bonzism, to throw out many malicious epigrams against religion. The similarity here observed is not real, but is that caricature resemblance the ape bears to man, and which has led many naturalists into error; for the ape has with man no real affinity, no true internal sympathy in his organic conformation, but merely the likeness of a spiteful parody, such as we may suppose an evil spirit to have devised to mock the image of God—the masterpiece of creation; and indeed the frailties and corruption of degenerate men may well give occasion to such a parody. We may lay it down as a general principle that the greater the apparent resemblance which a false religion, utterly and fundamentally different in its spiritual character and moral tendency, externally bears to the true, the more reprehensible will it be in itself, and the greater its hostility to the truth. An example near at hand will place the truth of this remark in the clearest light. If, for instance, Mahomet, instead of merely giving himself out as a prophet, had declared he was the son of God, the eternal Word, the incarnate Deity,



the true and real Christ, his religious system would certainly have been far more adverse and repulsive to our feelings than it now is, and would have shocked alike every mind trained in the intellectual discipline of Europe, brought up with Christian feelings, and even unconsciously imbued with such. But this is precisely the characteristic feature, the peculiar doctrine of the religion of Buddha; for not only is Buddha himself worshipped as an incarnate divinity, but this prerogative of a divine incarnation has been transmitted to his chief priests through every generation; and thus this personal idolatry has ever been kept alive. In regard to morals, too, a comparison between the religion of the Buddhists and of the Mahometans, would be equally disadvantageous to the former. The injurious influence which polygamy, and that degradation of the female sex it necessarily involves, exert on the manners and intellectual character of Mahometan nations, has been often observed, and can never be questioned. But that that other and opposite abuse of marriage, poly-andry, which is legally established among the Buddhist nations, is infinitely more repugnant to, and destructive of morality, and more debasing to the male character, must be perceptible to the feelings of every individual, and can require no comment. I do not find, indeed, in the different accounts of China, any mention made of this abominable practice; and it is very possible that in this, as in other cases, the good old customs of the Chinese have had the ascendancy, and preserved their beneficial influence: but in Thibet, the chief seat of Buddhism, in many parts of India, and in other countries where this religion prevails, the unnatural custom exists.

The writer\* best versed in the language and writings of the Buddhist Moguls boasts of their superior humanity and mildness of manners, when compared with the Mahometan nations; but this observation must be taken only in a relative sense, and understood of a mere outward polish, and superficial refinement of manner; for history does not show the Moguls to have been at all more humane in their conduct. The indescribable confusion in the mythological system of the Buddhists, their innumerable books of metaphysics, all wearisomely prolix and unintelligible, according to the explicit avowal of the critic just now cited,

\* M. Abel Remusat.

M. Remusat, prove the essentially false direction of speculation and philosophy among the Buddhists—a philosophy which, by a dialectic or rather ideal course, has been led into a chaos of void abstractions, and a pure nihilism; and more scientific observers have ever judged it to be an absolute system of atheism.

It would appear that the Nestorians, or other degenerate Christian sects, have exerted some influence on Buddhism, and co-operated in its further development;—so we may well imagine that this exotic influence has not tended to the amelioration or improvement of a religion false in its essence, and fundamentally corrupt; but that its vices and absurdities have remained equally flagrant, or, as it is easy to suppose, have been aggravated in the progress of time.

This religion of Fo must not be considered as resembling Christianity, because its followers have monastic institutions, and make use of a kind of rosary; but as the political idolatry of the Chinese for their state and sovereign is widely different from the true principle of Christian government, *that all power is from God*, so this false religion of Buddha is further removed than any other from Christianity: it is on the contrary adverse to our religion, and, so far from being half similar to Christianity, is a decidedly anti-Christian creed\*.

We may thus sum up the result of our inquiries:—among the great nations of primitive antiquity who stood the nearest,

\* No Gentile people preserved so long and in such purity the worship of the true God as the Chinese. This no doubt must be ascribed to the secluded situation of the country—to the great reverence of the Chinese for their ancestors, as well as to the patriarchal mildness of their early governments; and, we must add, to the unpoetical character of the nation itself, which was a safeguard against idolatry. There is historical evidence that, up to two centuries before the Christian era, idolatry had made little progress among this people. So vivid was their expectation of the Messiah—"the Great Saint who, as Confucius says, was to appear in the West"—so fully sensible were they not only of the place of his birth, but of the time of his coming, that, about sixty years after the birth of our Saviour, they sent their envoys to hail the expected Redeemer. These envoys encountered on their way the Missionaries of Buddhism coming from India—the latter, announcing an incarnate God, were taken to be the disciples of the true Christ, and were presented as such to their countrymen by the deluded ambassadors. Thus was this religion introduced into China, and thus did this phantasmagoria of Hell intercept the light of the gospel. So, not in the internal spirit only, but in the outward history of Buddhism, a demoniacal intent is very visible.—*Trans.*

or at least very near, to the source of sacred tradition—the word of primitive revelation—the Chinese hold a very distinguished place ; and many passages in their primitive history, many remarkable vestiges of eternal truth—the heritage of old thoughts—to be found in their ancient classical works, prove the originally high eminence of this people. But at a very early period, their science had taken a course completely erroneous, and even their language partly followed this direction, or at least assumed a very stiff and artificial character. Descending from one degree of political idolatry to a grade still lower, they have at last openly embraced a foreign superstition—a diabolic mimicry of Christianity, which emanated from India, has made Thibet its principal seat, prevails in China, and, widely diffused over the whole middle of Asia, reckons a greater number of followers than any other religion on the earth.

END OF LECTURE III.



## LECTURE IV.

Of the Institutions of the Indians—the Brahminical Caste, and the hereditary Priesthood.—Of the Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, considered as the Basis of Indian Life, and of Indian Philosophy.

WHEN Alexander the Great had attained the object of his most ardent desires, and, realising the fabulous expedition of Bacchus and his train of followers, had at last reached India, the Greeks found this vast region, even on this side of the Ganges—(for that river, the peculiar object of Alexander's ambition, the conqueror, in despite of all his efforts, was unable to reach)—the Greeks found this country extensive, fertile, highly cultivated, populous, and filled with flourishing cities, as it was divided into a number of great and petty kingdoms. They found there an hereditary division of castes, such as still subsists; although they reckoned not four, but seven castes, a circumstance, however, which, as we shall see later, argues no essential difference in the division of Indian classes at that period. They remarked, also, that the country was divided into two religious parties or sects, the *Brachmans* and the *Samaneans*. By the first, the Greeks designated the followers of the religion of Brahma, as well as of Vishnoo and Siva, a religion which still subsists, and is more deeply rooted and more widely diffused and prevalent in India than any other religious system; distinguished as it is by its leading dogma of the transmigration of souls, which has exerted the mightiest influence on every department of thought, on the whole bearing of Indian philosophy, and on the whole arrangement of Indian life. But by the Greek denomination of *Samaneans* we must certainly understand the Buddhists, as, among the rude nations of Central Asia, as in other countries, the priests of the religion of Fo bear at this day the name of *Schamans*. These priests indeed appear to be little better than mere sorcerers and jugglers, as are the priests of all idolatrous nations that are sunk to the lowest degree of barbarism and

superstition. The word itself is pure Indian, and occurs frequently in the religious and metaphysical treatises of that people; for originally, and before it had received such a mean acceptation among those Buddhist nations, it had quite a philosophical sense, as it still has in the Sanscrit. This word denotes that equability of mind, or that deep internal equanimity which, according to the Indian philosophy, must precede, and is indispensably requisite to, the perfect union with the God-head. In general all the names by which Buddha, the priests of his religion, and its important and fundamental doctrines are known, whether in Thibet, or among the Mongul nations, in Siam, in Pegu, or in Japan—in general, we say, all those names are pure Indian words; for the tradition of all those nations, with unanimous accord, deduces the origin of this sect from India.

The name of Buddha, which the Chinese have changed, or shortened into that of Fo, is rather an honorary appellation, and is expressive of the divine wisdom with which, in the opinion of his followers, he was endowed; or which rather, according to their belief, became visible in his person. The period of his existence is fixed by many at six hundred years, by others again at a thousand years, before the Christian era. His real and historical name was Gautama; and it is remarkable that the same name was borne by the author of one of the principal philosophical systems of the Hindoos, the Nyaya philosophy, the leading principles of which will be the subject of future consideration, when we come to speak of the Indian philosophy. Indeed, the dialectic spirit which pervades the Nyaya philosophy would seem to be of a kindred nature and like origin with the confused metaphysics of the Buddhists. But the names, notwithstanding their identity, denote two different persons; although even the founder of the dialectic system, like almost all other celebrated names in the ancient history, traditions, and science of the Indians, figures in the character of a mythological personage. But we must first take a view of the state of manners, and the state of political civilisation, in India, in order to be able to form a right judgment and estimate of the intellectual and scientific exertions of its inhabitants, and of the peculiar nature and tendency of the Indian opinions.

By the manner in which the Greek writers speak of the two

religious parties, into which Alexander found the country divided, it can scarcely be doubted that the Buddhists at that period were far more numerous, and more extensively diffused throughout India, than they are at the present day, and this inference is even corroborated by many historical vouchers of the Indians themselves. Although the Buddhists are now but an obscure sect of dissenters in the Western Peninsula, they are still tolerably numerous in several of its provinces ; while, on the other hand, they have complete possession of the whole Eastern and Indo-Chinese peninsula. Besides this sect, there are many other religious dissenters even in Hindostan ; such for instance, as the sect of *Jains*, who steer a middle course between the followers of the old and established religion of Brahma, and the Buddhists ; for, like the latter, they reject the Indian division and system of castes. Even the established religion itself is divided into three parties, which, though they do not form precisely separate sects, still are marked by no inconsiderable differences in their opinions, views, and conduct : according as each of these parties acknowledges the supremacy, or renders a nearly exclusive worship to one or other of the three principal Hindoo divinities, Brahma, Vishnoo, and Siva. And, although in the empire of the great Mogul, the number of the Mahometan conquerors, and of those that accompanied them into India, was very small, compared with the mass of the native population, yet, after the total destruction of this empire, there still remain several millions of Mahometans in the country. Even the Persian language, or a corrupt dialect of it, which these conquerors introduced, is still in many places in use as the language of ordinary life, trade, and business ; in the same way as the Portuguese in the maritime and commercial cities of India, or the *Lingua Franca* in our Eastern factories, serves as the usual and convenient medium of communication.

The Indian is not the only, or exclusively prevailing, language in the whole peninsula ; in several provinces, as for instance, on the southern coast, and in the Isle of Ceylon, quite a different language prevails ; and the old cultivated and classical speech of India is there unknown. The name of Sanscrit, by which the latter is designated, denotes a cultivated or highly-wrought language ; but the Pracrit, which is employed together or alternately with the Sanscrit in the theatrical pieces of the Indians, signifies a natural and artless speech,



and is not so much a distinct dialect as a softer pronunciation of the Sanscrit, which smoothes, suppresses, or melts down the hard and crowded consonants, and pays less regard to the more elaborate grammatical forms of this language. The Pracrit, which is used in dramatic pieces, particularly in the female parts, stands, from its more simple grammar, in the same relation to the Sanscrit as the softer Italian or Portuguese does to the old Latin, without however the same heterogeneous alloy. But, independently of these variations in the later and beautiful language of Indian poetry, the language of that country is split and divided into a number of dissimilar and widely dissimilar dialects, such as the Malabar, for example; and almost in every province the common language undergoes a variety of changes; and this is the case even in Bengal. The country of the Upper Ganges, especially Benares, is renowned for being the chief seat of the Sanscrit tongue,—the place, at least, where it is best understood, and spoken with the greatest purity.

Those languages which differ totally from the Indian, belong in part to quite a different race of men, mostly, perhaps to the Malays: for, so far is India from being entirely peopled by one single race of inhabitants, that we find in several of its provinces tribes of an origin totally different from that of the Hindoos. This great variety in the whole life, manners, and political institutions of the Indians, forms a striking contrast with the absolute unity, and internal uniformity of the Chinese Empire. It was perhaps this variety in the moral and political aspect of ancient India, that gave rise to the denomination which it has received in the old sacred Median books of Zoroaster, where, in the first *fargard*, or section of the Vendidad, it is described as the fifteenth pure region of the earth, created by Ormuzd, and designated by the name of *Hapte Heando*—a name which signifies the seven Indias. As India is still split into a multitude of sects and religions, and divided into different tribes, speaking various languages; so, as Herodotus long ago observed, it has for the most part been ever composed of a multitude of great and petty states, although from its natural boundaries it might easily have been formed into one great monarchy, and really constitutes but one country in its geographical circumscription.

The historian of India would have principally to speak of the successes of a long series of foreign conquerors, who, from

Alexander the Great to Nadir Shah, have invaded this country by the north-west side from Persia. The Greeks were indeed told that, before Alexander the Great, no foreign conqueror had ever invaded India; and even after this invasion, and on the death of Sandracottus, when the Indians were liberated from the transient dominion of the Greeks, they were for a long lapse of ages governed by native princes; and their country was parcelled out into a number of great and petty kingdoms, such as those of Magadha, Ayodha, &c. It is a striking incident in the moral and intellectual history of the Hindoos, that amid all the revolutions under their ancient and native rulers, and amid all the later vicissitudes of foreign conquest, their peculiar modes of life and their institution of castes should have been preserved, and, despite of all the changes of time and of empire, should have stood unchanged, like the one surviving monument of the primitive world. In the administration and government of this country, the absolute monarchical sway which exists in China, and the unlimited despotism of other Oriental countries, could never be realised; for that hereditary division of classes, and those hereditary rights belonging to each, which, as they form a part of the Indian constitution, have taken such deep root in the soil; and which, as they rest on the immoveable basis of ancient faith, have become, as it were, the second nature of this people—all these present an unassailable rampart, which not even a foreign conqueror could ever succeed in overthrowing. We can hence understand what led the Greeks to believe and assert that there were republican states in India. If from prepossessions, which were natural to that people, they asserted too much, or thought they saw more than a nearer investigation proves to be actually the case; still their assertion is not totally without foundation, for the Indian system of castes is in many respects more favourable to institutions of a republican nature, or at least republican tendency, than the constitution of any other Asiatic state. When those modern writers, therefore, who were the declared enemies of all hereditary rank and hereditary rights, spoke with contempt and abhorrence of the Indian constitution of castes, represented it as the peculiar basis of despotism, and even applied the name of caste as a party-word to the social relations of Europe; their assertions were false, and utterly opposed to history. The invectives of these writers may be easily accounted for, from their very

democratic views, or rather from their doctrine of absolute equality, as this equality itself is ever the attendant of despotism, produces it, or proceeds from it, and is one of its most distinctive characteristics. In confirmation of what we have said, we may observe, that even at the present day most of the cities of India possess municipal institutions, which are much admired by English writers, who attest from their personal experience and observation, their salutary influence on individual and public prosperity. In general the English have paid very great attention to the jurisprudence and civil legislation of India; as the fundamental principle of their Indian government is to rule that country according to its own laws, customs, and privileges; while, on the contrary, the other European powers that once had obtained a firm footing in India, formed alliances with, and attached themselves by preference to, the Mahometan sovereigns of the country. By this simple but enlightened principle in their Indian policy and administration, the English have obtained the ascendancy over all their rivals or opponents, and have become complete masters of the whole of this splendid region.

The scholars of Europe began their Indian researches by the study and translation of the laws and jurisprudence of the Hindoos, the text as well as commentaries, and it was only at a later period they extended their inquiries to other subjects. The Indian jurisprudence is undoubtedly a standing proof and monument of the comparatively high and very ancient moral and intellectual refinement of that people; and a more minute and profound investigation of that jurisprudence would no doubt give rise to many interesting points of comparison, and to many striking analogies, partly with the old Athenian, or first Roman laws, partly with the Mosaic legislation, and even in some particular points with the Germanic constitution. As the caste of warriors in India, who constitute the class of landed proprietors, and the aristocracy of the country, are founded on exactly the same principle as the hereditary nobility of Germany, it cannot excite surprise, if we find in India, not indeed the elaborate and complex feudality of the Germans, but a more simple system of fiefs.

But, according to the plan we have proposed to ourselves, in the history of all ancient, and especially of the primitive Asiatic nations, the matter of greatest moment must be to trace their



intellectual progress, their scientific labours, and predominant opinions; all those views of divine and human things, that have a mighty influence on life; and, finally, the peculiar religious feelings and principles of each of those ancient nations. In the second part of this work, when we shall have to speak of the progress of mankind in modern times, we may perhaps change our point of view, and find it of more importance to trace the mutual relations between the external state of society and the internal development of intellect. But in that remote antiquity, which is contiguous to the primitive ages, the points of greatest moment, as we have already observed, are the intellectual character, the modes of thinking, and the religion of those nations. On the other hand, their civil legislation, and even their political constitutions, however important, interesting, and instructive the closer investigation of those subjects may be in other respects, can occupy in this history but a secondary place; and it will suffice for our purpose to point out some leading points of legislation that serve as the foundation and principle of the moral and intellectual character of those nations. In India this leading point is the institution of castes, the most remarkable feature in all Indian life, and which in its essential traits existed in Egypt. This singular phenomenon of Indian life has even some points of connexion with a capital article of their creed, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls—a doctrine which will be later the subject of our inquiries, and which we shall endeavour to place in a nearer and clearer light. In showing the influence of the institution of castes on the state of manners in India, I may observe, in the first place, that in this division of the social ranks there is no distinct class of *slaves* (as was indeed long ago remarked by the *Greeks*); that is to say, no such class of bought slaves—no men, the property and merchandise of their fellow-men—as existed in ancient Greece and Rome, as exist even at this day among Mahometan nations; and, as in the case of the negroes, are still to be found in the colonial possessions of the Christian and European states. The labouring class of the *Sudras* is undoubtedly not admitted to the high privileges of the first classes, and is in a state of great dependence upon these; but this very caste of *Sudras* has its hereditary and clearly defined rights. It is only by a crime that a man in India can lose his caste, and the rights annexed to it. These rights are acquired by birth; except in the instance of

the offspring of unlawful marriages between persons of different castes. The fate of these hapless wretches is indeed hard,—harder, almost, than that of real slaves among other nations. Ejected, excommunicated as it were, loaded with malediction, they are regarded as the outcasts of society, yea almost of humanity itself. This terrible exclusion, however, from the rights of citizenship occurs only in certain clearly specified cases. There are even some cases of exception explicitly laid down, where a marriage with a person of different caste is permitted; or where, at least, the only consequence to the children of such marriage is a degradation to an inferior class of society. But the general rule is that a lawful marriage can be contracted only with a woman of the same caste. Women participate in all the rights of their caste; in the high prerogatives of Brahmins, if they are of the sacerdotal race (although there are not and never were priestesses among the Indians as among the other heathen nations of antiquity); or in the privileges of nobility, if they belong to the caste of the *Cshatriyas*. These privileges, which belong and are secured to women, and this participation in the rights and advantages of their respective classes, must tend much undoubtedly to mitigate the injurious effects of polygamy. The latter custom has ever prevailed, and still prevails, in India; though not to the same degree of licentiousness, nor with the same unlimited and despotic control, as in Mahometan countries; but a plurality of wives is there permitted only under certain conditions, and with certain legal restrictions; consequently, in that milder form, under which it existed of old in the warm climes of Asia, and according to the patriarchal simplicity of the yet thinly peopled world. The much higher social rank, and better moral condition of the female sex in India, are apparent from those portraits of Indian life which are drawn in their beautiful works of poetry, whether of a primitive or a later date; and from that deep feeling of tenderness, that affectionate regard and reverence, with which the character of woman and her domestic relations are invariably represented. These few examples suffice to show the moral effects of the Indian division of castes; and while they serve to defend this institution against a sweeping sentence of condemnation, or the indiscriminate censure of too partial prejudice, they place the subject in its true and



proper light, and present alike the advantages and defects of the system.

From its connexion with the general plan of my work, I am desirous of entering more deeply into the internal principle of this singular division and rigid separation of the social ranks, and into the historical origin of this strange constitution of human society. When the Greeks, who accompanied or followed Alexander into India, numbered seven instead of four castes in that country, they did not judge inaccurately the outward condition of things; but they paid not sufficient attention to the Indian notions of castes; and their very enumeration of those castes proves they had mistaken some points of detail. In this enumeration they assign the first rank to *Brachmans*, or wise men; and by the artisans, they no doubt understood the trading and manufacturing class of the *Vaisyas*. The councillors and intendants of kings and princes do not constitute a distinct caste, but are mere officers and functionaries; who, if they be lawyers, belong to, and must be taken from, the caste of Brahmins; though the other two upper castes are not always rigidly excluded from these functions. The class again that tends the breeding of cattle, and lives by the chase, forms not a distinct caste, but merely follows a peculiar kind of employment. And when the Greeks make two castes of the agriculturists and the warriors, they only mean to draw a distinction between the labourers and the masters, or the real proprietors of the soil. Even the name of *Cshatriyas* signifies landed proprietor; and, as in the old Germanic constitution, the *arriere-ban* was composed of landed proprietors, and the very possession of the soil imposed on the nobility the obligation of military service; so, in the Indian constitution, the two ideas of property in land, and military service, are indissolubly connected. Some modern inquirers have attached very great importance to the undoubtedly wide and remarkable separation of the fourth or menial caste of *Sudras* from the three upper castes. They have thought they perceived, also, a very great difference in the bodily structure and general physiognomy of this fourth caste from those of the others; and have thence concluded that the caste of *Sudras* is descended from a totally different race, some primitive and barbarous people whom a more civilised nation, to whom the three upper castes must



have belonged, have conquered and subdued, and degraded to that menial condition, the lowest grade in the social scale—a grade to which the iron arm of law eternally binds them down. This hypothesis is in itself not very improbable; and it may be proved from history that the like has really occurred in several Asiatic, and even European, countries. In the background of old, mighty and civilised nations, we can almost always trace the primeval inhabitants of the country, who, dispossessed of their territory, have been either reduced to servitude by their conquerors, or have gradually been incorporated with them. These primitive inhabitants, when compared with their later and more civilised conquerors, appear indeed in general rude and barbarous; though we find among them a certain number of ancient customs and arts, which by no means tend to confirm the notion of an original and universal savage state of nature. It is possible that the same circumstances have occurred in India; though this is by no means a necessary inference, for humanity in its progress, follows not one uniform course, but pursues various and widely different paths; and, hitherto, at least, no adequate historical proof has, in my opinion, been adduced for the reality of such an occurrence in India. It has also been conjectured that the caste of warriors, or the princes and hereditary nobility, possessed originally greater power and influence; and that it is only by degrees the race of Brahmins has attained to that great preponderance which it displays in later times, and which it even still possesses. We find, indeed, in the old epic, mythological, and historical poems of the Indians, many passages which describe a contest between these two classes, and which represent the deified heroes of India victoriously defending the wise and pious Brahmins from the attacks of the fierce and presumptuous Cshatriyas. This account, however, is susceptible of another interpretation, and should not be taken exclusively in this political sense. That in the brilliant period of their ancient and national dynasties and governments, the princes and warlike nobility possessed greater weight and importance than at present, is quite in the nature of things, and appears indeed to have been undoubtedly the case. From many indications in the old Indian traditions and histories, it would appear that the caste of Cshatriyas was partially, at least, of foreign extraction; while those traditionary accounts constantly represent the caste

of Brahmins as the highest class, and nobler part, nay, the corner-stone of the whole community.

The origin of an hereditary caste of warriors, when considered in itself, may be easily accounted for, and it is no wise contrary to the nature of things that, even in a state of society where legal rights are yet undefined, the son, especially the eldest, should govern and administer the territory or property which his deceased father possessed, and even in those cases where it was necessary, should take possession, administer, and defend this property by open force and the aid of his dependents.

But afterwards, when the social relations became more clearly fixed by law, and an union on a larger scale was formed by a general league, as the duties of military service were annexed to the soil, so the right to the soil was again determined by, and depended on, military service; now, in that primitive period of history, such a political union might have been formed by a common subordination to a higher power, or by a confederacy between several potentates; and this has really been the origin of an hereditary landed nobility in many countries.

The hereditary continuance or transmission of arts and trades, whereby the son pursues the occupation of the father, and learns and applies what the latter has discovered, has nothing singular in itself, and appears indeed to contain its own explanation. But it is not easy, or at least equally so, to account for the exclusive distribution and the exact and rigid separation of castes, particularly by any religious motives and principles, which are, however, indubitably connected with this institution. Still less can we understand the existence of a great hereditary class of priests, eternally divided from the rest of the community, such as existed both in India and Egypt. To comprehend this strange phenomenon, we must endeavour to discover its origin, and trace it back, as far as is possible, to the primitive ages of the world. If, for the sake of brevity, I have used the expression, "*a class of hereditary priests*," I ought to add, in order to explain my meaning more clearly, that the word *priests* must not be taken in that limited sense which antiquity attached to it; that the Brahmins are not merely confined to the functions of prayer, but are strictly and eminently theologians, since they alone are permitted to read

and interpret the Vedas, while the other castes can read only with their sanction such passages of those sacred writings as are adapted to their circumstances, and the fourth caste are entirely prohibited from hearing any portion of them. The Brahmins are also the lawyers and physicians of India, and hence the Greeks did not designate them erroneously, when they termed them the *caste of philosophers*.

We have already had occasion to observe that the Mosaic narrative,—that first monument of all history, (which a very intellectual German writer has called the primitive document of the human race, and which it indeed is even in a mere historical sense, and in the literal acceptance of the word)—that the Mosaic narrative, we say, ascribes to the Cainites the origin of hereditary arts and trades. And there are two which are particularly worthy of remark, and to which I drew your attention—the knowledge of metals, and the art of music. I used the general expression, the knowledge of metals, because in the primitive ages of the world, the art of working mines, or of exploring and extracting metals from the earth, was essentially connected with the art of preparing and polishing them; and this knowledge of metals was very instrumental in forwarding the infant civilisation of the primitive world, as the art of working and polishing them has ever contributed to the refinement of mankind. By the music of the Cainites, I said we were not to understand our own more elaborate and sublime system of melody. This art was chiefly consecrated, in those ancient times, to the uses of divine service; still older, perhaps, was the medicinal, or rather the magical, use and influence of music. This is at least indicated by the tradition and mythology of all nations; and such a supposition is quite conformable to the spirit of those early ages; and I would here remind you that, in the primitive symbolical writing of the Chinese, the sign of a magician represents also a priest—a character which, as Remusat has observed, is not to be found in the narrow circle of their symbols. I added, that the existence of an hereditary caste of warriors among the Cainites was possible, and even probable; though not so, in my opinion, the existence of an hereditary sacerdotal caste. But though such an institution did not emanate from the Cainites, it may at least have been occasioned by them. As I said before, the Mosaic history represents the vast,



boundless, prodigious corruption of the world in the age immediately preceding the deluge, as produced solely by the union of the better and godly portion of mankind with the lawless descendants of Cain. Thus this would suppose a certain dread and apprehension of any alliance and intercourse with a race laden with malediction, and pregnant with calamity. And may not this very circumstance have given rise to the establishment of a distinctly separate and hereditary class, not of priests in the later signification of that word, but of men chosen and consecrated by God, and entirely devoted to his service? and, consequently, is it not among the later Sethites, we must look for the origin of this institution?

We should transport ourselves in imagination to the age of the patriarchs, and then consider that, with the high powers which they still possessed, they must have watched with the most jealous and far-sighted solicitude over the fate of their posterity, in order to preserve them in their original purity and high hereditary dignity. The Indian traditions acknowledge and revere the succession of the first ancestors of mankind, or the holy patriarchs of the primitive world, under the name of the seven great *Rishis*, or sages of hoary antiquity; though they invest their history with a cloud of fictions. They place all these patriarchs in the primitive world, and assign them to the race of Brahmins;—a circumstance which cannot here appear unfitting. It has been often observed that the Indians have no regular histories, no works of real historical science; and the reason is that with them the sense of the primitive world is still fresh and lively, and that not only do they clothe their ideas in a poetical garb, but all their conceptions of human affairs and events are exclusively mythological; so that all the real events of later historical times are absorbed in the element of mythology; or at least strongly tinged with its colours. It is in the same way, the panegyrists of the Chinese language remark that the almost total absence of grammar in that language, among a people of such highly cultivated intellect, should not be taken merely to denote the poverty and jejuneness of the infancy of speech, as this in a great measure originated in the fact that the profound primitive emotions, which gave birth to those first languages, were too absorbed in the subject of their contemplation, too much bent on giving utterance to the most effective word, or expressing themselves with the most condensed

brevity, to perplex or trouble themselves with nicer distinctions, and minor and often superfluous rules.

The providential care of these first patriarchs for the preservation and prosperity of their offspring and race is evinced in those patriarchal scenes described not only in the Sagas of other primitive nations, but also in the sacred writings of the Hebrews; and where the hoary grandsire imparts and transmits to his sons and grandsons, the power of his benediction, which was not a mere empty form of words, as the special inheritance of each. We see, too, that, after assigning the first rank to the eldest son, or to some favourite child, perhaps, originally chosen and preferred by God, the venerable patriarch utters some words of warning which the succeeding history but too well justifies; or darkly indicates a deep presentiment of some great impending calamity. But there is, in particular, a passage relative to the first great progenitor of mankind which deserves to be here noticed. When the calamitous epoch of the first fraternal contest, and the first fatal fratricide had elapsed, it is said in Holy Writ: "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." The first thing that must strike us in this passage is the great and humiliating inferiority which it involves. Adam was created after the likeness of Almighty God; but Seth is begotten after the likeness of Adam. Yet there is no doubt that, from the peculiar style and manner of Holy Writ, a very high pre-eminence was here conferred on Seth. For in the same way as we have seen that the patriarchs were wont to impart their blessings to their sons and their posterity, Adam granted and communicated to Seth, as to his first-born in this second commencement of the human race, and as his inheritance and exclusive birthright, all those prerogatives and high gifts and powers, which he himself had originally received from his Creator, and which, on his reconciliation with his God, he had once more obtained. Nothing similar is said of the other sons and daughters afterwards begotten by Adam, and through whom other nations have derived their descent from the common parent. This circumstance confirms and explains that high pre-eminence which, according to sacred tradition, was conferred on the race of Seth. As to the high powers which the father of mankind had preserved after his fall, or had a second time received, we may well suppose that, after the crime and flight of Cain, he would endeavour to retrieve

his errors by the establishment of the better race of Seth, and by a consequent renovation of humanity. This is not a mere arbitrary supposition, for it is expressly said in Holy Writ that the first man, ordained to be "the father of the whole earth," (as he is there called) became on his reconciliation with his Maker, the wisest of all men, and, according to tradition, the greatest of prophets, who, in his far-reaching ken, foresaw the destinies of all mankind, in all successive ages down to the end of the world. All this must be taken in a strict historical sense, for the moral interpretation we abandon to others. The pre-eminence of the Sethites, chosen by God, and entirely devoted to his service, must be received as an undoubted historical fact, to which we find many pointed allusions even in the traditions of the other Asiatic nations. Nay, the hostility between the Sethites and Cainites, and the mutual relations of these two races, form the chief clue to the history of the primitive world, and even of many particular nations of antiquity. That, after the violent but transient interruption occasioned by the deluge, the remembrance of many things might revive, and the same or a similar hostility between the two races which had existed in the ante-diluvian world, might be a second time displayed, is a matter which it is unnecessary to examine any further. Equally needless would it be to show that, in the increasing degeneracy of man, every thing was soon more and more disfigured and deranged, and finally became for the most part undistinguishable, till it was afterwards a problem for the historical inquirer to reduce to the simple elements of their origin the greatest, most extraordinary, and most remarkable phenomena which still remained, or were remembered, of the primitive ages.

If I think it not impossible that the Indian constitution of castes, and its most important branch, the Brahminical class—that is to say, the moral and general conception of this ancient institution, may be connected with the Scriptural history and the sacred tradition respecting the race of Seth; I must observe that to this hypothesis an objection can no more be taken from the present character and moral condition of the Brahmins, than we can estimate the high gifts, the great men, and the mighty prophets, that the Almighty once accorded to the Jewish nation, or such noble natures as those of Moses and Elias, by the present fallen state of that dispersed people.

These remarks may suffice to give an idea of the most



important feature in Indian society. Before I attempt to examine the second great characteristic of this people—the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, a principle which, if it has not produced, has at least given the peculiar bent to their whole philosophy, I wish to take a general view of polytheism, particularly as our notions of it, chiefly derived from the Greeks, are by no means perfectly applicable to the primitive nations of Asia.

We are wont to regard the Grecian mythology, and its many-coloured world of fables, only as the beautiful effusion of poetry, or a playful creation of fancy; and we never think of inquiring deeply or minutely into its details, or of examining its moral import and influence. It is the more natural that the mythology of the Greeks should produce this impression on our minds, and that we should regard it in this light, as all the higher ideas and severer doctrines on the God-head, its sovereign nature and infinite might, on the Eternal Wisdom and Providence that conducts and directs all things to their proper end, on the Infinite Mind and Supreme Intelligence that created all things, and that is raised far above external nature; all these higher ideas and severer doctrines have been expounded more or less perfectly by Pythagoras, or by Anaxagoras and Socrates; and have been developed in the most beautiful and luminous manner by Plato and the philosophers that followed him. But all this did not pass into the popular religion of the Greeks, and it remained for the most part a stranger to these exalted doctrines; and, though we find in this mythology many things capable of a deeper import and more spiritual signification, yet they appear but as rare vestiges of ancient truth—vague presentiments—fugitive tones—momentary flashes, revealing a belief in a supreme Being, an almighty Creator of the universe, and the common Father of mankind.

But it is far otherwise in the Indian mythology. There, amid a sensual idolatry of nature more passionate and enthusiastic still than that of the Greeks, amid pagan fictions and conceptions far more gigantic than those of the latter, we find almost all the truths of natural theology, not indeed without a considerable admixture of error, expressed with the utmost earnestness and dignity. We meet too, in this mythology, with the most rigidly scientific and metaphysical notions of the Supreme Being, his attributes and his relations; and it is the

peculiar character of the Indian mythology to combine a gigantic wildness of fantasy, and a boundless enthusiasm for nature, with a deep mystical import, and a profound philosophic sense. If the Pythagoreans had succeeded in the design, which they in all probability entertained, of rendering their lofty notions on the Deity and on man, on the immortality of the soul, and the invisible world, more generally prevalent, and of introducing these ideas into the popular religion ; as it was not their intention entirely to reject the vulgar creed, but only to mould it to their own principles, and impart to it a higher and more spiritual sense (an attempt which was afterwards made by the New Platonists and the Emperor Julian, out of hatred to Christianity, though, as the time had then long gone by, their enterprise was attended with no permanent effects); if the Pythagoreans, we say, had succeeded in their design, the Greek mythology might then have borne some resemblance to the Indian, and we might have instituted a comparison between the two. In the Indian mythology this strange combination, this inconsistent junction of the sublimest truth with the most sensual error, of the wildest and most extravagant fiction with the most abstract metaphysics, and even the purest natural theology (if we may thus call the divine Revelation of the primitive world); this strange combination, we say, has not been the effect of artful interpolation, but the fruit of native growth and of earliest development.

We must now be on our guard not to admit too lightly or too quickly the coincidence of certain symbols and conceptions of mythology with truths and doctrines familiar to ourselves. How much, for instance, would a man err, who would suppose that there was any analogy in the Indian symbol and notion of *Trimurti*, or the divine Triad, I do not say with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, but with the opinion of either of the Platonic schools on the triple essence or the triple Personality of the one God. In this symbol the heads of the three principal Hindoo divinities, Brahma, Vishnoo, and Siva, the Gods of creation, preservation, and destruction, are united in one figure, and this union undoubtedly indicates the primary energy common to all three. If we examine each in particular, we shall see that the attributes assigned to Brahma, and the expressions usually applied to his person, when divested of their poetical garb and mythic accompaniments, may often, almost

literally, and in strict truth, be referred to the Deity. The all-pervading and self-transforming Vishnool is much more the wonderful Prometheus of nature, than a real and well-defined divinity. The third in this divine Triad, the formidable and destructive Siva, has but a very remote analogy with the Deity that judges and chastises the world according to justice. This God of destruction, whose worshippers appear to have been formerly the most numerous in India, as those of Vishnool are at the present day ; this God of destruction, with his serpents and bracelets of human skulls, appears evidently to be that demon of corruption who brought death into all creation, and who here, whimsically and inconsistently enough, has been introduced into the symbol, and made a part of the Deity itself. This union or confusion of Eternal Perfection with the Evil Principle is made in another way by the Indian philosophers ; as some of them explain the doctrine of Trimurti, or the divine Triad, by reference to the *Traigunyan*, or the three *qualities*. These three different regions, or degrees, into which, according to the Indian doctrine, all existence is divided, are the pure world of eternal truth or of light, the middle region of vain appearance and illusion, and the abyss of darkness. However, it must be observed, that the Indians do not express the pure and metaphysical idea of the Supreme Being by either of the names of the two last mentioned popular divinities ; nor do they even denote this idea by the name of Brahma, the first person of their trinity, but by the word *Brahm*, a neuter noun, which signifies the Supreme Being.

As there were now two conflicting elements in the breast of man—the old inheritance or original dowry of truth, which God had imparted to him in the primitive revelation ; and error, or the foundation for error in his degraded sense and spirit now turned from God to nature—how easily must error have sprung up, when the precious gem of divine truth was no longer guarded with jealous care, nor preserved in its pristine purity ; how much must truth have been obscured, as error advanced in all its formidable might, and in all its power of seduction ; and how soon must not this have happened among a people, like the Indians, with whom imagination and a very deep, but still sensual, feeling for nature, were so predominant !—It was thus a wild enthusiasm, and a sensual idolatry of nature, generally



superseded the simple worship of Almighty God, and set aside or disfigured the pure belief in the eternal uncreated Spirit. The great powers and elements of nature, and the vital principle of production and procreation through all generations, then the celestial spirits, or the heavenly host (to speak the language of antiquity), the luminous choir of stars, which the whole ancient world regarded not as mere globes of light or bodies of fire, but as animated substances; next the Genii and tutelar spirits, and even the souls of the dead, received now divine worship; and men, instead of honouring the Creator in these, and of regarding these in reference to their Creator, considered them as gods. Such is, when we have once supposed that man had turned away from God to nature,—such is the natural origin of polytheism, which in every nation assumed a different form according to the peculiar modes of life, and the prevailing principles of life, in each.

Among the Indians this ruling principle of existence was the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which appears indeed to be the most characteristic of all their opinions, and was by its influence on real life, by far the most important. We must in the first place remember, and keep well in our minds, that among those nations of primitive antiquity, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not a mere probable hypothesis, which, as with many moderns, needs laborious researches and diffuse argumentations in order to produce conviction on the mind. Nay, we can hardly give the name of faith to this primitive conception; for it was a lively certainty, like the feeling of one's own being, and of what is actually present; and this firm belief in a future existence exerted its influence on all sublunary affairs, and was often the motive of mightier deeds and enterprises than any mere earthly interest could inspire. I said above that the doctrine of the transmigration of souls was not unconnected with the Indian system of castes; for the most honourable appellation of a Brahmin is *Tvija*, that is to say, a second time born, or regenerated. On one hand this appellation refers to that spiritual renovation and second birth of a life of purity consecrated to God, as in this consists the true calling of a Brahmin, and the special purpose of his caste. On the other hand this term refers to the belief that the soul, after many transmigrations through various forms of animals, and various stages of natural existence, is permitted in certain cases, as a

peculiar recompense, when it has gone through its prescribed cycle of migrations, to return to the world, and be born in the class of Brahmins. This doctrine of the transmigration of souls through various bodies of animals or other forms of existence, and even through more than one repetition of human life, (whether such migrations were intended as the punishment of souls for their viciousness and impiety, or as trials for their further purification and amendment)—this doctrine which has always been, and is still so prevalent in India, was held likewise by the ancient Egyptians. This accordance in the faith of these two ancient nations, established beyond all doubt by historical testimony, is indeed remarkable; and even in the minutest particulars on the course of migration allotted to souls, and on the stated periods and cycles of that migration, the coincidence is often perfectly exact. How strangely now is this most singular error mixed up, I do not say with truth, but with a feeling that is certainly closely akin to primitive truth! When an individual of our age, out of disgust with modern and well-known systems, or with the vulgar doctrines, and from a love of paradox, adopted this ancient hypothesis of the transmigration of souls; he merely considered the bare transmutation of earthly forms.\* But among those ancient nations this doctrine rested on a religious basis, and was connected with a sentiment purely religious. In this doctrine there was a noble element of truth—the feeling that man, since he has gone astray, and wandered so far from his God, must needs exert many efforts, and undergo a long and painful pilgrimage, before he can rejoin the Source of all perfection;—the firm conviction and positive certainty that nothing defective, impure, or defiled with earthly stains can enter the pure region of perfect spirits, or be eternally united to God; and that thus, before it can attain to this blissful end, the immortal soul must pass through long trials and many purifications. It may now well be conceived, (and indeed the experience of this

\* Schlegel here alludes to the celebrated Lessing, who in his work entitled "The Education of the Human Race," had maintained the doctrine of the Metempsychosis, a doctrine doubly absurd in a Deist, like Lessing, for the metempsychosis was a philosophical, though false, explanation of the primitive and universal dogma of an intermediate or probationary state of souls.—*Trans.*

life would prove it,) that suffering, which deeply pierces the soul, anguish that convulses all the members of existence, may contribute, or may even be necessary, to the deliverance of the soul from all alloy and pollution, as, to borrow a comparison from natural objects, the generous metal is melted down in fire and purged from its dross. It is certainly true that the greater the degeneracy and the degradation of man, the nearer is his approximation to the brute; and when the transmigration of the immortal soul through the bodies of various animals is merely considered as the punishment of its former transgressions, we can very well understand the opinion which supposes that man who, by his crimes and the abuse of his reason, had descended to the level of the brute, should at last be transformed into the brute itself. But what could have given rise to the opinion that the transmigration of souls through the bodies of beasts was the road or channel of amendment, was destined to draw the soul nearer to infinite perfection, and even to accomplish its total union with the Supreme Being, from whom, in all appearance, it seemed calculated to remove it further? And as regards a return to the present state and existence of man, what thinking person would ever wish to return to a life divided and fluctuating as it is, between desire and disgust, wasted in internal and external strife, and which, though brightened by a few scattered rays of truth, is still encompassed with the dense clouds of error;—even though this return to earthly existence should be accomplished in the Brahminical class so highly revered in India, or in the princely and royal race so highly favoured by fortune? There is in all this a strange mixture and confusion of the ideas of this world with those of the next; and how the latter is separated from the former by an impassable gulf, they seem not to have been sufficiently aware. Both these ancient nations, the Egyptians as well as the Indians, regarded, with few exceptions, the Metempsychosis, not as an object of joyful hope, but rather as a calamity impending over the soul; and whether they considered it to be a punishment for earthly transgressions, or a state of probation—a severe but preparatory trial of purification—they still looked on it as a calamity; which to avert or to mitigate they deemed no attempt, no act, no exertion, no sacrifice ought to be spared.

In the manner, however, in which these two nations con-



ceived this doctrine, there was a striking and fundamental difference; and if the leading tenet was the same among both, the views which each connected with it were very dissimilar. Deprived, as we are, of the old books and original writings of the Egyptians, we are unable perfectly to comprehend and seize their peculiar ideas on this subject, and state them with the same assurance as we can those of the Indians, whose ancient writings we now possess in such abundance, and which in all main points perfectly agree with the accounts of the ancient classics. But we are left to infer the ideas of the Egyptians on the Metempsychosis only from their singular treatment of the dead, and the bodies of the deceased; from that sepulchral art (if I may use the expression) which with them acquired a dignity and importance, and was carried to a pitch of refinement, such as we find among no other people; from that careful and costly consecration of the corpse, which we still regard with wonder and astonishment in their mummies and other monuments. That all these solemn preparations, and the religious rites which accompanied them, that the inscriptions on the tombs and mummies had all a religious meaning and object, and were intimately connected with the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, can admit of no doubt; though it is a matter of greater difficulty to ascertain with precision the peculiar ideas they were meant to express. Did the Egyptians believe that the soul did not separate immediately from the body which it had ceased to animate, but only on the entire decay and putrefaction of the corpse? Or did they wish by their art of embalment to preserve the body from decay, in order to deliver the soul from the dreaded transmigration? The Egyptian treatment of the dead would certainly seem to imply a belief that, for some time at least after death, there existed a certain connexion between the soul and body. Yet we cannot adopt this supposition to an unqualified extent, as it would be in contradiction with those symbolical representations that so frequently occur in Egyptian art, and in which the soul immediately after death is represented as summoned before the judgment-seat of God, severely accused by the hostile demon, but defended by the friendly and guardian spirit, who employs every resource to procure the deliverance and acquittal of the soul. Or did the Egyptians think that by all these rites, as by so many magical expedients, they would

keep off the malevolent fiend from the soul, and obtain for it the succour of good and friendly divinities? Now that the gates of hieroglyphic science have been at last opened, we may trust that a further progress in the science will disclose to us more satisfactory information on all these topics.

The Indians, however, who ever remained total strangers to the mode of burial and treatment of the dead practised in Egypt, adopted a very different course to procure the deliverance of the human soul from transmigration :—they had recourse to philosophy—to the highest aspirings of thought towards God—to a total and lasting immersion of feeling in the unfathomable abyss of the divine essence. They have never doubted that by this means a perfect union with the Deity might be obtained even in this life, and that thus the soul, freed and emancipated from all mutation and migration through the various forms of animated nature in this world of illusion, might remain for ever united with its God. Such is the object to which all the different systems of Indian philosophy tend—such is the term of all their inquiries. This philosophy contains a multitude of the sublimest reflections on the separation from all earthly things, and on the union with the God-head; and there is no high conception in this department of metaphysics, unknown to the Hindoos. But this absorption of all thought and all consciousness in God—this solitary enduring feeling of internal and eternal union with the Deity, they have carried to a pitch and extreme that may almost be called a moral and intellectual self-annihilation. This is the same philosophy, though in a different form, which in the history of European intellect and science, has received the denomination of *mysticism*. The possible excesses—the perilous abyss in this philosophy, have been in general acknowledged, and even pointed out in particular cases, where egotism or pride has been detected under a secret disguise, or where this total abstraction of thought and feeling has spurned all limit, measure, and law. In general, however, the European mind, by its more temperate and harmonious constitution, by the greater variety of its attainments, and above all, by the purer and fuller light of revealed truth, has been preserved from those aberrations of mysticism which in India have been carried to such a fearful extent, not only in speculation, but in real life and practice; and which, trans-

ceding as they do all the limits of human nature, far exceed the bounds of possibility, or what men have in general considered as such. And the apparently incredible things the Greeks related more than two thousand years ago, respecting the recluses of India, or *Gymnosophists*, as they called those Yogis, are found to exist even at the present day; and ocular experience has fully corroborated the truth of their narratives.

END OF LECTURE IV.



## LECTURE V.

**A Comparative View of the Intellectual Character of the four principal Nations in the Primitive World—the Indians, the Chinese, the Egyptians, and the Hebrews; next of the peculiar Spirit and political Relations of the Ancient Persians.**

As, after discord had broken out among mankind, humanity became split and divided into a multitude of nations, races, and languages, into hostile and conflicting tribes, castes rigidly separated, and classes variously divided; as, indeed, when once we suppose this original division and primitive opposition in the human race, it could not be otherwise from the very nature and even destiny of man; so in a psychological point of view, the moral unity of the individual man was broken, and his faculties of will and understanding became mutually opposed, or followed contrary courses. The whole internal structure of human consciousness was deranged, and, in the present divided state of the human faculties, there is no longer the full play of the harmonious soul—of the once unbroken spirit—but its every faculty hath now but a limited, or, to speak more properly, one half of its proper power.

The restoration of the full life and entire operation of the divided faculties of the human soul must be considered now only as a splendid exception—the high gift of creative genius, and of a more than ordinary strength of character; and such a reunion of faculties must be looked upon as the high problem which constitutes the ultimate object and ideal term of all the intellectual and moral exertions of man. When in an individual, a clear, comprehensive, penetrative understanding, that has mastered all sound science, is combined with a will not only firm, but pure and upright, such an individual has attained the great object of his existence; and when a whole generation, or mankind in general, present this harmonious concord between science on the one hand, and moral conduct and external life, or, to characterise them by one word, the

general will, on the other, which is often in utter hostility with science—we may then truly say that humanity has attained its destiny. The great error of ordinary philosophy, and the principal reason that has prevented it from accomplishing its ends, is the supposition it so hastily admits that the consciousness of man, now entirely changed, broken, and mutilated, is the same as it was originally, and as it was created and fashioned by its Maker; without observing that since the great primeval Revolution, man has not only been outwardly or historically disunited, but even internally and psychologically deranged. The moral being of a man, a prey to internal discord, may be said to be quartered, because the four primary faculties of the soul and mind of man—Understanding and Will, Reason and Imagination, stand in a twofold opposition one to the other, and are, if we may so speak, dispersed into the four regions of existence. Reason in man is the regulating faculty of thought; and so far it occupies the first place in life, and the whole system and arrangement of life; but it is unproductive in itself, and even in science it can pretend to no real fertility or immediate intuition. Imagination on the other hand is fertile and inventive indeed, but left to itself and without guidance, it is blind, and consequently subject to illusion. The best will, devoid of discernment and understanding, can accomplish little good. Still less capable of good is a strong, and even the strongest understanding, when coupled with a wicked and corrupt character; or should such an understanding be associated with an unsteady and changeable will, the individual destitute of character, is entirely without influence.

To prove, moreover, how all the other faculties of the soul, or the mind, elsewhere enumerated, are but the connecting links—the subordinate branches\* of those four primary faculties; how the general dismemberment of the human consciousness reaches even to them; how they diverge from one another, and appear still more split and narrowed; to prove this would lead me too far, and is the less necessary, as, in the peculiar character of particular ages or nations, the historical inquirer can observe but those four primary faculties mentioned

\* The four secondary faculties of human consciousness are, according to our author, the memory, the conscience, the impulses or passions, and the outward senses.—*Trans.*

above, as the intellectual elements prevalent in each. As in the intellectual character of particular men, or in any given system of human thought, fiction, or science (and these can be better described and more closely analysed than the fleeting and transient phenomena of real life and the social relations); as in every such individual production, I say, of human thought and human action, either Reason will preponderate as a systematic methodiser and a moral regulator, or a fertile, inventive Imagination will be displayed, or a clear, penetrative understanding, or again a peculiar energy of will and strength of character will be observed; so the same holds good in the great whole of universal history—in the moral and intellectual existence—the character, or the mind of particular ages or nations in the ancient world.

This is apparent not only in the very various manner, in which sacred tradition—the external word to man revealed—was conceived, developed, and disfigured among each of those nations; but in the peculiar form and direction which the internal word in man—that is to say, his higher consciousness and intellectual life—assumed among each. Such an intellectual opposition evidently exists between those two great primitive nations already characterised, that inhabit the extreme East and South of Asia—an opposition between reason and imagination. In regard to the intellectual and moral character of nations as well as of individuals, Reason is that human faculty which is conversant with grammatical construction, logical inferences, dialectic contests, systematic arrangement; and in practical life it serves as the divine regulator, in so far as it adheres to the higher order of God. But when it refuses to do this, and wishes to deduce all from itself and its own individuality, then it becomes an egotistical, over-refining, selfish, calculating, degenerate Reason, the inventress of all the arbitrary systems of science and morals, dividing and splitting every thing into sects and parties. Imagination must not be considered as a mere faculty for fiction, nor confined to the circle of art and poetry—it includes a faculty for scientific discoveries; nor did a mind destitute of all imagination ever make a great scientific discovery. There is even a higher, purely speculative fancy, which finds its proper sphere in a mysticism, like the Indian, that has already been described. Even if a mysticism, like that which constitutes the basis of the Indian philosophy, were entirely free from



all admixture of sensual feelings, and were entirely destitute of images, we should certainly not be right in refusing on that account to imagination its share in this peculiar intellectual phenomenon. That in the intellectual character of the Chinese, reason, and not imagination, was the predominant element, it would, after the sketch we have before given of that people, and which was drawn from the best and most recent sources and authorities, be scarcely necessary to prove at any length—so clearly is that fact established. Originally, when the old system of Chinese manners was regulated by the pure worship of God, not disfigured, as among other nations, by manifold fictions, but breathing the better spirit of Confucius, it was undoubtedly in a sound, upright Reason, conformable to God, that the Chinese placed the foundation of their moral and political existence; since they designated the Supreme Being by the name of Divine Reason. Although some modern writers in our time have, like the Chinese, applied the term *divine reason* to Almighty God; yet I cannot adopt this Chinese mode of speech, since, though according to the doctrine from which I start, and the truth of which has been all along presupposed, the living God is a spirit; yet it by no means follows thence that God is Reason, or Reason God. If we examine the expression closely, and in its scientific rigour, we can with as little propriety attribute to God the faculty of reason, as the faculty of the imagination. The latter prevails in the poetical mythology of ancient paganism; the former, when the expression is really correct, designates rationalism or the modern idolatry of Reason; and to this, indeed, we may discern a certain tendency even in very early times, and particularly among the Chinese. Among the latter people, at a tolerably early period, a sound, just Reason, conformable and docile to divine revelation, was superseded by an egotistical, subtle, over-refining Reason, which split into hostile sects, and at last subverted the old edifice of sacred tradition, to reconstruct it on a new revolutionary plan.

Equally, and even still more strongly, apparent is the predominance of the imaginative faculty among the Indians, as is seen even in their science and in that peculiar tendency to mysticism which this faculty has imparted to the whole Indian philosophy. The creative fulness of a bold poetical imagination is evinced by those gigantic works of architecture which may well sustain a comparison with the monuments of Egypt; by a

poetry, which in the manifold richness of invention is not inferior to that of the Greeks, while it often approximates to the beauty of its forms; and, above all, by a mythology which, in its leading features, its profound import, and its general connexion, resembles the Egyptian, while in its rich clothing of poetry, in its attractive and bewitching representations, it bears a strong similarity to that of the Greeks. This decided and peculiar character of the whole intellectual culture of the Indians will not permit us to doubt which of the various faculties of the soul is there the ruling and preponderant element.

A similar, and equally decided opposition in the intellectual character and predominant element of human consciousness is observed between the Hebrews and Egyptians; though this was an opposition of a different kind, and of a deeper import. To show this more clearly, I will take the liberty of interrupting for a moment the order I have hitherto followed, of characterising each nation in regular succession, and with as much accuracy and fulness as possible; in order by a comparative view of the four principal nations of remote antiquity, to draw such a general sketch of the first period of universal history as may serve at once for a central point in our inquiries, and for the groundwork of subsequent remarks. Such a comparison will tend to facilitate our survey of the primitive ages of the world: and in this general combination of the whole, each part will appear in a clearer light.

If I wished to characterise in one word the peculiar bearing and ruling element of the Egyptian mind—however unsatisfactory in other respects such general designations may be—I should say that the intellectual eminence of that people was in its scientific profundity—in an understanding that penetrated or sought to penetrate by magic into all the depths and mysteries of nature, even into their most hidden abyss. So thoroughly scientific was the whole leaning and character of the Egyptian mind, that even the architecture of this people had an astronomical import, even far more than that of the other nations of early antiquity. I have already had occasion to speak of the deep and mysterious signification of their treatment of the dead. In all the natural sciences, in mathematics, astronomy, and even in medicine, they were the masters of the Greeks; and even the profoundest thinkers among the latter, the Pythagoreans, and afterwards the great Plato himself, derived from them the

first elements of their doctrines, or caught at least the first outline of their mighty speculations. Here too, in the birth-place of hieroglyphics, was the chief seat of the Mysteries; and Egypt has at all times been the native country of many true, as well as of many false secrets. These few remarks may here serve to characterise this people; we shall later have occasion to add many minuter traits to complete this brief sketch of the Egyptian intellect.

Very different was the character of the ancient Hebrews, who, in science as well as in art, can sustain no comparison with those other nations we have spoken of, and to whom we must apply a very different criterion of excellence. The moral eminence of this people, or the part allotted to it in high historical destiny, lies rather in the sphere of will, and in a well-regulated conduct of the will. Moses himself was, undoubtedly, as it is said of him, "versed in all the science of the Egyptians;" for he had received a completely Egyptian education, which, by the care of an Egyptian princess, was of the highest and politest kind, and consequently, as the customs of the country imply, extremely scientific. Even his name, according to the credible testimony of several ancient writers, was originally Egyptian, and afterwards Hebraised; for *Moyse*,\* as he is called in the Greek version of the Seventy, signifies in Egyptian, *one saved out of the water*. But the Hebrew people were far from possessing that Egyptian science of which Moses was so great a master; on the contrary, the Jewish legislator seemed to consider the greater part of that foreign science, in which he himself was so well versed, as of little service to his object; and in many instances sought to withhold this knowledge from his nation. Many of the Mosaic precepts, indeed, especially such as have a reference to external life, to subsistence, diet, and health, and which are in part at least founded on reasons of climate, are entirely conformable to Egyptian usages, and are found to have been practised among that people; for these ancient lawgivers and founders of Asiatic states did not scruple to give even medical precepts in their codes of moral legislation, that embraced the minutest circumstances of life. But to these precepts and usages the Hebrew legislator has imparted in general a higher import and

\* Μωϋσῆς.



a religious consecration. We must not suppose, however, that he has taken all his laws from this source, or make this a matter of reproach to the Jewish lawgiver, as many critics of our own times have done; for, to minds enslaved by the narrow spirit of the age, difficult, indeed, is it to transport themselves into that remote antiquity. It would be a great error, also, to suppose that all the science which Moses had acquired by his Egyptian education, he wished to conceal from his nation, and reserve for the secret use of himself and a few confidential friends. It is evident, if we regard the subject only in an historical point of view, that a higher and better element, completely foreign to the science of Egypt, animated and pervaded all the views and conduct of this great man, whether we consider him as the founder and lawgiver of the Hebrew state, or as the guide and instructor of the Hebrew people. In the forty years' sojourn of Moses in the Arabian desert with Jethro, one of whose seven daughters he married, and who has rightly been accounted an Emir, or petty pastoral prince of Arabia, this higher principle silently grew up and expanded in the breast of this exalted man, until it at last burst forth in all the majesty of divine power. All that appeared to Moses truly sound and excellent in Egyptian customs and science, or serviceable to his purpose, he adopted and used with choice and circumspection. But all that was incompatible with his designs, and which he knew to be corrupt, he strenuously rejected, or he gave to it a totally different application, and established a higher principle in its room.

In the same way he was not disconcerted by the secret arts of the Egyptian sorcerers, for it was no difficult matter for him to vanquish them in the presence of the king by the higher power of God. It is thus we should understand the conduct of Moses in reference to the science and modes of thinking of the Egyptians; and that conduct will be found not only perfectly irreproachable in a human point of view, but entitled to our warmest admiration. If for instance we suppose that Moses, the first and greatest writer in the Hebrew tongue,—the founder and legislator of that language also, was, if not the first that discovered, at least the first that fixed and regulated, the Hebrew alphabet, we may easily conceive him to have taken the first ten, as well as the last twelve Hebrew letters from the Egyptian hieroglyphics; for, even at that early period,

the hieroglyphics, while they retained their original symbolical meaning, had acquired an alphabetical use. This supposition is at least extremely probable, for many of the Hebrew letters are found in precisely the same form in the hieroglyphical alphabet; though our knowledge of this alphabet is still so very imperfect, and though we have deciphered but perhaps a tenth part of all the various literal symbols which may there exist. But to continue our supposition, Moses did not wish to take from the Egyptian hieroglyphics more than the twenty-two literal signs; he neglected the other hieroglyphs and natural symbols, for he had no need of them. On the contrary, he studiously excluded all natural symbols from his religious system, and prohibited with inexorable severity the chosen people the use of images and all that was most remotely connected with such a service. He well foresaw that if he made the slightest concession on this point, and permitted the least indulgence, or left the slightest opening to the passion for natural and symbolical representations, it would be impossible to set any restraint on this indulgence, and that the Hebrews when they had once swerved from the path marked out for them, would follow the same course as the pagan nations. The subsequent history of the Jewish nation sufficiently proves how important and necessary was that part of the Mosaic legislation which proscribed all that was connected with the religious use of images. But wherein consisted the peculiar bent of mind, the moral and intellectual character traced out to the Hebrews by their legislator and all their patriarchs? Completely opposed to the Egyptian science—to the Egyptian understanding, that dived and penetrated by magical power into the profoundest secrets and mysteries of nature, the ruling element of the Hebrew spirit was the *will*—a will that sought with sincerity, earnestness and ardour, its God and its Maker, far exalted above all nature, went after his light when perceived, and followed with faith, with resignation, and with unshaken courage, his commands, and the slightest suggestions of his paternal guidance, whether through the stormy sea, or across the savage desert. I do not mean to assert that the whole nation of the Jews was thoroughly, constantly, and uniformly actuated and animated with such a pure spirit and such pure feelings—many pages of their history attest the contrary, and but too well manifest how often they were in contradiction with themselves. But this and this alone was the

fundamental principle, the first mighty impulse, the permanent course of conduct which Moses and the other leaders and chosen men among the Hebrews sought to trace out to their people—this was the abiding character, the great distinctive mark which they had stamped upon their nation. This, too, was the distinguishing character of all the primitive patriarchs, as represented in the sacred writings of the Old Testament.

Independently of particular traits of national character, and the special destiny of nations, it is philosophically certain, or, if we may so speak, it is a truth grounded on psychological principles, that the will and not the understanding is in man the principal organ for the perception of divine truths. And by this, we understand a will that seeks out with all the earnestness of desire the light of truth, which is God, and when that light has appeared clear, or begins to appear clear, follows with fidelity its guidance, and listens to the internal voice of truth and all its high inspirations. I affirm that in man the understanding is not the principal organ for the perception of divine truth—that is to say, the *understanding alone*. On the understanding alone, indeed, the light may dawn and may even be received—but if the will be not there—if the will pursue a separate and contrary course, that light of higher knowledge is soon obscured, and soon becomes clouded and unsteady; or, if it should still gleam, it is changed into the treacherous meteor of illusion. Without the co-operation of a good will, this light cannot be preserved or maintained in its purity; nay, the will must make the first advances towards truth; it must lay the first basis for the higher science of divine truth, and religious knowledge. In other words, as the God whom we acknowledge and revere as the Supreme Being is a living God; so truth, which is God, is a living truth—it is only from life that it can be derived, by life attained, and in life learned. In the present state of man's existence, in this period of the world—a period of discord, of sunken power, of misery and delusion—a period, which, as the Indians designate our fourth and last epoch of the world by the name of Caliyug, is the period of predominant woe and misfortune; in this present life, the path marked out for man as leading to the knowledge of divine truth and to a higher life, is the path of patience, resignation, and perseverance in the struggle of life—a toilsome probation, cheered and supported by hope. Desire or love is the beginning



or root of all higher science or divine knowledge ; perseverance in desire, in faith, and in the combat of life, forms the mid-way of our pilgrimage ; but the term of this pilgrimage is only a term of hope. This necessary period of preparation, of slow and irksome preparation, and gradual progression, cannot be avoided or overleaped by the most heroic exertions of man. The supreme perfection and full contentment of the soul—the intimate union of the spirit with God—and God himself cannot be thus grasped, wrested, and held fast by a violent concentration of all our thoughts on a single point, by a species of arrogated omnipotence—the self-potency of obstinate and tenacious thought ; as the Indian philosophy believes, and as the modern German philosophy\* for some time seemed to believe, or at least attempted.

The real character and even history of the Jewish people are frequently misunderstood, and ill appreciated ; because the men of our times, who in all their speculations, and whatever may be the nature of their opinions, incline ever more and more to the spirit of *the absolute*, are unable to seize and enter into the idea of that epoch of preparation and progressive advancement which was as indispensable for the perfection of intellect and knowledge, as of moral life itself. The whole historical existence and destiny of the Hebrews is confined within one of those great epochs of providential dispensation—it marks but one stage in the wonderful march of humanity towards its divine goal. The whole existence of this people turned on the pivot of hope, and the keystone of its moral life projected its far shadows into futurity. Herein consists the mighty difference between the sacred traditions of the Hebrews and those of the other ancient Asiatic nations. When we examine the primitive records and sacred books of these nations, who were so much nearer the fountain-head of primitive revelation than the later nations of the polished West ;—when we leave out of sight the moral precepts and ordinances of liturgy comprised in these books, we shall find their historical view is turned back towards the glorious past, and that they breathe throughout a melancholy regret for all that man and the world have since lost. And undoubtedly these primitive traditions

\* Schlegel here alludes to that sort of intuitive mysticism in matters of religion, which was the boast of the adherents of Schelling's philosophy.—*Trans.*

contain many ancient and beautiful reminiscences of primeval happiness, for even Nature herself was then far different from what she is at present, more lovely, more akin to the world of spirits, peopled and encompassed with celestial genii; and not only the small garden of Eden, but all creation, enjoyed a state of Paradisaic innocence and happy infancy, ere strife had commenced in the world, and ere death was known. Out of the multitude of these holy and affecting recollections, and out of the whole body of primitive traditions, Moses, by a wise law of economy, has retained but very little in the revelation, which was specially destined for the Hebrew people, and has communicated only what appeared to him absolutely and indispensably necessary for his nation, and for his particular designs, or rather the designs of God, in the conduct of that nation. But the little he has said—the insignificant brevity of the first pages of the Mosaic history, involves much profound truth for us in these later ages, and comprises very many solutions as to the great problems of primitive history, did we but know how to extract the simple sense with like simplicity. But every thing else, and in general the whole tenor of the Mosaic writings, like the existence of the Hebrew nation, was formed for futurity—and to this were the views of the Jewish legislator almost exclusively directed. And as all the sacred writings of the Old Testament, which, by this direction towards futurity, were even in their *outward form* so clearly distinguishable from the sacred books and primitive records of other ancient nations; as all these sacred writings, I say, from the first lawgiver, who in a high spiritual sense, delivered from the Egyptian bondage of nature his people chosen for that especial object, down to the royal and prophetic Psalmist, and down to that last voice of warning and of promise that resounded in the desert, were both in their form and meaning eminently prophetic; so the whole Hebrew people may, in a lofty sense, be called prophetic, and have been really so in their historical existence and wonderful destiny.

To these four nations, whom we have compared, in respect to the different shape and course which the primitive revelation and sacred tradition assumed among them, as well as in respect to the diversities in their intellectual development, the contrarieties in the internal Word, and higher consciousness of each; to these nations, in order to complete the instructive

parallel, we may now add a fifth—the Persians; a people which in some points was similar, in others dissimilar to one or other of these nations, and which bearing a nearer affinity to some in its doctrines and views of life, or even in its language and turn of fancy, and more closely connected with others in the bonds of political intercourse, may be said to occupy a middle place among these nations. In ancient history, the Persians form the point of transition from the first to the second epoch of the world; and in this they hold the first place, in so far as they commenced the career of universal conquest; a passion which passed from them to the Greeks, and from these in a still fuller extent to the Romans, like some noxious humour—some deadly disease transmitted with augmented virulence through every age from generation to generation; and even in modern times, this hereditary malady in the human race has again broken out.

But, considered in a spiritual point of view, and with regard to their religion and sacred traditions, the Persians must be classed with the four great nations of the primitive world, and can be compared with them only; for, in this respect, they so totally differed from the Phœnicians and Greeks, that no comparison can be instituted between them and the latter; and no parallel, where the objects are so unlike, can be productive of any useful result. To the Indians they bore the strongest resemblance in their language, poetry, and poetic Sagas; their conquests, which stretched far into the provinces of Central Asia, brought them in contact with the remote Eastern Asia, and the celestial Empire of the Chinese, so completely sequestered from the western world; with Egypt they were involved in political contests, till they finally subdued it—and in their religious doctrines and traditions, they more nearly approximated to the Hebrews; or their views of God and religion were more akin to the Hebrew doctrines than those of any other nation. Of the King of Heaven, and the Father of eternal light, and of the pure world of light, of the eternal Word by which all things were created, of the seven mighty spirits that stand next to the throne of Light and Omnipotence, and of the glory of those heavenly hosts which encompass that throne; next, of the origin of evil and of the Prince of darkness, the monarch of those rebellious spirits—the enemies of all good; they in a great measure entertained



completely similar, or at least very kindred, tenets to those of the Hebrews. That with all these doctrines much may have been, or really was, combined, which the ancient Hebrews and even we would account erroneous, is very possible, and indeed may almost naturally be surmised ; but this by no means impairs that strong historical resemblance we here speak of. A circumstance well worthy of observation is the manner in which Cyrus and the Persians are represented in the historical books of the Old Testament, and are there so clearly distinguished from all other pagan nations. Among the latter they can with no propriety be numbered ; nay, they felt towards the Egyptian idolatry as strong an abhorrence, and in political life manifested it more violently, than the Hebrews themselves. During their sway in Egypt, this idolatry was an object of their persecution, and under Cambyeses, they pursued a regular plan for its utter extirpation. Even Xerxes in his expedition into Greece, destroyed many temples and erected fire-chapels in the whole course of his march ; for it cannot be questioned but religious views were principally instrumental in giving birth to the Persian conquests, at least to those of an earlier date. This is a circumstance which should not be overlooked, if we would rightly understand the whole course of these events, and penetrate into the true spirit and original design of these mighty movements in the world. From their fire-worship, we must not be led to accuse the ancient Persians of an absolute deification of the elements, and of a sensual idolatry of nature ; in their religion, which was so eminently spiritual, the earthly fire and the earthly sacrifice were but the signs and the emblems of another devotion and of a higher power. Symbols and figurative representations were in general not so rigidly excluded from their religious system, as from that of the Hebrews. Yet, among the Persians, these had a totally different character from those in the Indian or Egyptian idolatry. The generous character of the ancient Persians, their life and their manners, which display such an exalted sense of nature, possess in themselves something peculiarly winning and captivating for the feelings. The leading result of the few observations we have made may be comprised in the following general remarks :—

If a poetical recollection of Paradise sufficed for the moral destiny of man—if the pure feeling, enthusiasm, and admira-

tion for sidereal nature were alone capable of revealing all the glory of the celestial abodes, and of the heavenly hosts, of opening to mental eyes the gates of eternal light—if this were the one thing necessary, and of the first necessity for man—if it were, or could be conformable to the will of God, that the eternal empire of pure light should be diffused over the whole earth by the enthusiasm of martial glory, by the generous valour and heroic magnanimity of a chivalric nobility, such as the Persian undoubtedly was—then, indeed, would the Persians hold the pre-eminence, or be entitled to claim the first rank among those four nations that were nearest the source of the primitive revelation. But it was otherwise ordained; the path alone fit and salutary for man, and evidently marked out by the will of God, is the path of patience and perseverance—the unremitting struggle of slow preparation. Thus, as we may easily conceive, it was not the Persians, distinguished as that nation was by its noble character, and by its spiritual views of life; it was not the Egyptians, versed and initiated as they were in all the mysteries of nature and all the depths of science;—but it was the politically insignificant, and, in an earthly point of view, the far less important, almost imperceptible, people of the Hebrews, that were chosen to be the medium of transition—the connecting link between the primitive revelation and the full development of religion in modern times, and its last glorious expansion towards the close of ages. They are now the carriers, and, we may well say, the porters of the designs of Providence, destined to bear the torch of primitive tradition and sacred promise from the beginning to the consummation of the world:—while the once magnanimous nation of the Persians has sunk from that pure knowledge of truth, and those high spiritual notions of religion it once entertained, down to the anti-Christian superstition of Mahomet; and the profound people of Egypt has become totally extinct, and is not to be traced even in the small community of Coptic Christians, who have preserved a feeble remnant of the ancient language.

Since now this general sketch of the various and contrary directions which the human mind followed in the first ages of history has been rendered more clear and definite by a comparative view of the five principal nations of the primitive world, it only remains for us to subjoin some important traits in the history of each, to complete this picture of the earliest nations; in order to pass over, along with the Persians, to the second

period of the ancient world—a period which is so much nearer to us, and appears so much more clear and open to our apprehension.

The origin of ancient heathenism we must seek among the Indians, and not among the Chinese, for the reason we have before alleged : namely, that in the primitive ages, the Chinese observed a pure, simple, and patriarchal worship of the Deity ; and it was only when under the first general and powerful emperor of China, the rationalism introduced by the sect of Taosse had brought about a complete revolution in the whole system of Chinese faith, manners, and customs, that a real form of paganism—the Indian superstition of Buddha—was subsequently introduced into that country. This subversion of the whole system of ancient government—of ancient doctrines—and of what among the Chinese was inseparably allied with the latter, the early system of writing, was a real revolution in the public mind. As the general burning of the sacred books, and the persecution and execution of many of the learned, were measures directed solely against the school of Confucius, that adhered to the old system of morals and government, it is by no means an arbitrary and baseless hypothesis to ascribe to the antagonist party, the rationalist sect of Taosse, a great share in this violent moral and political revolution ; inasmuch as the powerful Emperor Chi-ho-angti must have been quite in the interest of this party. Although the erection of the great wall of China, and the settlement of a Chinese colony in Japan, gave external splendour to his reign ; yet at home its despotic violence rendered it thoroughly revolutionary. And so this mighty catastrophe, which occurred two thousand years ago in the Chinese empire, widely removed as it is from us by the distance of space and time, and different as is the form under which it occurred, bears nevertheless no slight resemblance or analogy to much we have seen and experienced in our own times. To explain the contradiction which seems involved in the fact, that on one hand we have commended that pure, simple, and patriarchal worship of the Deity by the Chinese in the primitive period ; and much that denoted the comparatively high state of civilisation among this people, together with a science perverted and degenerate indeed, yet carried to a high degree of refinement ; and that, on the other hand, we have pointed out many things in their primitive writing-system, which displayed a great rudeness and poverty of ideas, and a very confined circle of symbols, we may observe that it is with





China as with many other ancient civilised countries, where, in the background of a ruling and highly polished people, a close investigation will discover a race of primitive inhabitants more barbarous, or at least less advanced in intellectual refinement. Such a race is mentioned by historians as existing in different provinces of China under the name of Mino—they are precisely characterised as an earlier, less polished race of inhabitants, and they have indeed been preserved down to later times. The historical inquirer meets almost always in the first ages of the world with two strata of nations, consisting of an elder and a younger race;—in the same way as the geologist in his investigation of the earth's surface can clearly distinguish a twofold formation of mountains and separate periods in the formation of that surface. Thus, in China, the more polished new-comers and founders of the subsequent nation and state, accommodated themselves in many respects to the manners and customs, the language and even perhaps symbolical writing of these half savages, as the Europeans have partly done, when they have wished to civilise and instruct the Mexicans and other barbarous nations; and as men must always act in similar cases, if they would wish success to crown their benevolent endeavours. All researches into the origin of the Chinese nation and Chinese civilisation ever conduct the inquirer to the north-west, where the province of Shensee is situated, and to the countries lying beyond. Thus this only serves to confirm the opinion, highly probable in itself, and supported by such manifold testimony, of the general derivation of all Asiatic civilisation from the great central region of Western Asia.

Agreeably to this opinion, the Indian traditions, as we have already mentioned, deduce the historical descent of Indian civilisation from the northern mountainous range of the Himalaya and the country northwards; and in support of this tradition, we may cite the vast ruins, the immense subterraneous temples hewn out of the rock, in the neighbourhood of the old and celebrated city of *Bamyan*. Though the latter city be not in the proper India, but more northward towards Cabul, in Hindu Cutch, still its ruins present to the eye of the spectator the peculiar forms and structure of the architecture and colossal images of India, (whereof they contain a great abundance,) such as are observed in the other great monumental edifices of the Indians at Ellore, in the centre of the southern province of

Deccan, in the Isles of Salsette and Elephanta, in the neighbourhood of Bombay, in the island of Ceylon, and near Mavalipuram on the coast of Madras. All these immense temples, which have been hewn in the cavities of rocks, or have been cut out of the solid rock; and where often many temples are ranged above and beside the other, together with the buildings for the use of the Brahmins and the swarms of pilgrims, occupying in length and breadth the vast space of half a German mile, and even more;—these temples form the regular places of Hindoo pilgrimage, whither immense multitudes of pilgrims flock from all the countries of India; and an English writer, who wrote as an eye-witness, estimated the multitude at the almost incredible number of two millions and a half. Together with the colossal images of gods and of sacred animals, such as the elephant and the nandi, or the bull sacred to Siva, we find the rocky walls of these subterraneous temples adorned with an almost incalculable number of carved figures, representing various scenes from the Indian mythology. These figures jut so prominently from the rock, that it would almost seem as if their backs alone joined the wall. The multitude of figures is exceedingly great, and in the ruins near Bamyan, the number is computed at twelve thousand; though this calculation may not perhaps be very accurate, for the thick forests which surround these now desolate ruins are often the repair of tigers and serpents, and thus all approach to them is attended with danger. Besides, in the ruins of Bamyan many of the figures, and even some of the colossal idols, have been destroyed by the Mahometans, for whenever their armies chance to pass by these ruins, they never fail to point their cannon against the images of those fabulous divinities, which all Mahometans hold in so much abhorrence.

As to architecture, the perfection which this art attained among the Indians is evident from the beautiful workmanship and varied decoration of their columns, whole rows of which, like a forest of pillars, support the massy roof of upper rock. Notwithstanding the essential difference which must exist in the architecture of temples hewn out of rocks, or constructed in the cavities of rocks, we shall find that the prevailing tendency in Indian architecture is towards the pyramidal form. On the other hand, it is observed that the art of vaulting appears to have been less known, or, at least, not to have attained great perfection, or been in frequent use. We find, too, among

these monuments, vast walls constructed out of immense blocks of stone, and rudely cut fragments of rock, not unlike the old Cyclopean structures. The amateurs of such subjects have acquired a more accurate knowledge of them by the splendid illustrations which the English have published; for a mere verbal description can with difficulty convey a just notion of the nature and peculiar character of this architecture. Of the political history of India little can be said, for the Indians scarcely possess any regular history—any works to which we should give the denomination of historical; for their history is interwoven and almost confounded with mythology, and is to be found only in the old mythological works, especially in their two great national and epic poems, the Ramayan and the Mahabarat, and in the eighteen Puranas (the most select and classical of the popular and mythological legends of India), and, perhaps, in the traditionary history of particular dynasties and provinces; and even the works we have mentioned are not merely of a mytho-historical, but in a great measure of a theological and philosophical purport. The more modern history of Hindostan, from the first Mahometan conquest at the commencement of the eleventh century of our era, can, indeed, be traced with pretty tolerable certainty; but as this portion of Indian history is unconnected with, and incapable of illustrating the true state and progress of the intellectual refinement of the Hindoos, it is of no importance to our immediate object. The more ancient history of that country, particularly in the earlier period, is most fabulous, or, to characterise it by a softer, and at the same time, more correct name, a history purely mythic and traditionary; and it would be no easy task to divest the real and authentic history of ancient India of the garb of mythology and poetical tradition; a task which, at least, has not yet been executed with adequate critical acumen.

Chronology, too, shares the same fate with the sister science of history, for in the early period it is fabulous, and in the more modern, it is often not sufficiently precise and accurate. The number of years assigned to the first three epochs of the world must be considered as possessing an astronomical import, rather than as furnishing any criterion for an historical use. It is only the fourth and last period of the world—the age of progressive misery and all-prevailing woe, which the Indians term Caliyug, that we can in any way consider an historical



epoch ; and this, the duration of which is computed at four thousand years, began about a thousand years before the Christian era. Of the progress and term of this period of the world, considered in reference to the history of mankind, the Indians entertain a very simple notion. They believe that the condition of mankind will become, at first, much worse, but will be afterwards ameliorated. The regular historical epoch, when the chronology of India begins to acquire greater certainty, and from which, indeed, it is ordinarily computed, is the age of King Vikramaditya, who reigned in the more civilised part of India, somewhat earlier than the Emperor Augustus in the west, perhaps about sixty years before our era. It was at the court of this monarch that flourished nine of the most celebrated sages and poets of the second era of Indian literature ; and among these was Calidas, the author of the beautiful dramatic poem of " Sacontala," so generally known by the English and German translations. It was in the age of Vikramaditya that the later poetry and literature of India, of which Calidas was so bright an ornament, reached its full bloom. The elder Indian poetry, particularly the two great epic poems above mentioned, entirely belong to the early and more fabulous ages of the world ; so far at least as the poets themselves are assigned to those ages, and figure in some degree as fabulous personages. We may, however, observe, that in the style of poetry, in art, and even, in the language itself, there reigns a very great difference between these primitive heroic poems, and the works of Calidas and other contemporary poets—the difference is at least as great as that which exists between Homer and Theocritus, or the other bucolick poets of Greece. The oldest of the two epic poems of the Indians, the Ramayana by the poet Valmiki, celebrates Rayma, his love for a royal princess, the beautiful Sita, and his conquest of Lanka, or the modern isle of Ceylon. Although in the old historical Sagas of the Indians, we find mention made of far-ruling monarchs and all-conquering heroes ; still these traditions seem to show, as in the instance first cited, that in the oldest, as in the latest times prior to foreign conquest, India was not united in one great monarchy, but was generally parcelled out into a variety of states ; and this fact serves to prove that such has ever been in general the political condition of that country. The whole body of ancient Indian traditions and mythological history is to be found in the

other great epic of the Indians, the Maha-Barata, whose author, or at least compiler, was Vyasa, the founder of the Vedanta philosophy, the most esteemed, and most prevalent of all the philosophical systems of the Hindoos. This leads us to observe a second remarkable, and singularly characteristic, feature in Indian intellect and Indian literature, so widely remote from the relation between poetry and philosophy among other nations, particularly the Greeks. This is the close connexion and almost entire fusion of poetry and philosophy among this people. Many of their more ancient philosophical works were composed in metre, though they possess productions of a later period, which display the highest logical subtilty and analysis. Their great old poems, whatever may be the beauty of the language, and the captivating interest of the narrative, are generally imbued with, and pervaded by, the most profound philosophy; and among this people, even the history of metaphysics ascends as far back as the mythic ages. This, at least, holds good of the authors, to whom the invention of the leading philosophical systems has been ascribed; although the subsequent commentaries belong to a much later and more historical period. Thus the Mahabarata contains as an episode a didactic poem, or philosophical dialogue between the fabulous personages and heroes of the epic, known in Europe by the name of the Bhagavatgita, and which has recently been ably edited and expounded in Germany, by Augustus William Von Schlegel, and William Von Humboldt. The leading principles of the Vedanta philosophy are copiously set forth in this poem, which may be regarded as a manual of Indian mysticism; for such is the ultimate object of all Indian philosophy; and of this peculiar propensity of the Hindoo mind we have already cited some remarkable traits. For the accomplishment of our more immediate object, and in order rightly to understand the true place which the intellectual culture of India occupies in primitive history, a general knowledge of Indian philosophy is far more important and necessary, than any minute analysis and criticism on the manifold beauties of the very rich poetry of that country; and this philosophy we shall now endeavour to characterise according to its various systems, and in its main and essential features.

## LECTURE VI.

Of the Hindoo Philosophy—Dissertation on Languages—Of the peculiar political Constitution and Theocratic Government of the Hebrews—Of the Mosaic Genealogy of Nations.

THE Indian philosophy, from the place it holds in the primitive intellectual history of Asia, and from the insight it gives us into the character and peculiar tendency of the human mind in that early period, possesses a high, almost higher, interest than that offered by the beautiful and captivating poetry of this ancient people. However, even the poetry of the Indians contains much that refers to, or bears the stamp of, that peculiar mystical philosophy which we have more than once spoken of. We shall give a more correct and comprehensive idea of the Indian philosophy, if we observe, beforehand, that the six Indian systems which are the most prevalent and the most celebrated, and which, though in many points differing from the Vedas, are not to be regarded as entirely reprehensible or heterodox,—the six Indian systems, we say, must be classed in couples, and that the first of each pair treats of the beginning of the subject discussed in the second, and the second contains the development and extension of the principles laid down in the first, or applies those principles to another and higher object of inquiry. In the whole Indian philosophy there are, in fact, only three different modes of thought, or three systems absolutely divergent, and we shall give a sufficiently clear idea of these systems, if we say that the first is founded on nature,—the second on thought, or on the thinking self; and the third attaches itself exclusively to the revelation comprised in the Vedas. The first system, which seems to be one of the most ancient, bears the name of the Sanchyá philosophy—a name which signifies “the philosophy of numbers.” This is not to be understood in the Pythagorean sense, that numbers are the principle of all things, or according to the very similar prin-



ciple laid down in the Chinese books of I—King, where we find the eight koua, or the symbolic primary lines of all existence. But the Sanchyá system bears this name because it reckons successively the first principles of all things and of all being to the number of four or five-and-twenty. Among these first principles, it assigns the highest place to Nature—the second to understanding, and by this is meant not merely human understanding, but general and even Infinite Intelligence; so that we may consider this system as a very partial philosophy of Nature; and indeed it has been regarded by some Indian writers as atheistical—a censure in which the learned Englishman, Mr. Colebrooke, (to whose extracts and notices we are indebted for our most precise information on this whole branch of Indian literature)\* seems almost inclined to concur. This system was, however, by no means a coarse materialism, or a denial of the Divinity and of every thing sacred. The doubts expressed in the passages cited by Mr. Colebrooke are directed far more against the Creation than against God; they regard the motive which could have induced the Supreme Being, the Spirit of Infinite Perfection, to create the external world, and the possibility of such a creation.

The Sanchyá philosophy would be more properly designated in our modern philosophic phraseology as a system of complete dualism, where two substances are represented as co-existent—on one hand, a self-existent energy of Nature, which emanated, or eternally emanates, from itself; and on the other hand, eternal truth, or the Supreme and Infinite Mind.

The Indian philosophers in general were so inclined to regard the whole outward world of sense as the product of illusion, as a vain and idle apparition, and we can well imagine they were unable to reconcile the creation of such a world (which appeared to them a world of darkness, or perhaps, on a somewhat higher scale, as an intermediate state of illusion) with their mystical notion of the infinite perfection of the Supreme Being and Eternal Spirit. For even in ethics, they were wont to place the idea of Supreme Perfection in a state of absolute

\* The valuable articles by this great Sanscrit scholar on Hindoo philosophy have excited a greater sensation in France and Germany, than in his own country. It would be well if the Asiatic Society were to publish those articles in a separate form.—*Trans.*

repose, but not (at least to an equal degree) in the state of active energy or exertion. Great as the error of such a system of dualism may be—there is yet a mighty difference between a philosophy which denies, or at least misconceives, the creation, and one which denies the existence of the Deity; for such atheism never occurred to the minds of those philosophers. The doctrine of a primary self-existing energy in nature, or of the eternity of the universe, may, in a practical point of view, appear as gross an error; but in philosophy we must make accurate distinctions, and forbear to place this ancient dualism on the same level with that coarse materialism—that destructive and atheistic atomical philosophy, or any other doctrines professed by the later sects of a dialectic rationalism.

Valuable, undoubtedly, as are such extracts and communications from the originals in a branch of human science still so little known, yet they will not alone suffice, and, without a certain philosophic flexibility of talent in the inquirer, they will fail to afford him a proper insight into the true nature, the real spirit and tendency of those ancient systems of philosophy. That the Indian philosophy, even when it has started from the most opposite principles, and when its circuitous or devious course has branched more or less widely from the common path is sure to wind round, and fall into the one general track—the uniform term of all Indian philosophy—is well exemplified by the second part of the Sanchyá system (called the Yoga philosophy), where we find a totally different principle proclaimed; and while it utterly abandons the primary doctrine of a self-existent principle in nature laid down in the first part of the philosophy, it unfolds those maxims of Indian mysticism which recur in every department of Hindoo literature. That total absorption in the one thought of the Deity, that entire abstraction from all the impressions and notions of sense—that suspension of all outward, and in part even of inward, life effected by the energy of a will tenaciously fixed and entirely concentrated on a single point—and by which, according to the belief of the Indians, miraculous power and supernatural knowledge are attained—are held up in the second part of the Sanchyá system as the highest term of all mental exertion. The word Yoga signifies the complete union of all our thoughts and faculties with God—by which alone the soul can

be freed—that is, delivered from the unhappy lot of transmigration ; and this, and this only, forms the object of all Indian philosophy.

The Indian name of Yogi is derived from the same word, which designates this philosophy. The Indian Yogi is a hermit or penitent, who, absorbed in this mystic contemplation, remains often for years fixed immoveably to a single spot. In order to give a lively representation of a phenomenon so strange to us, which appears totally incredible and almost impossible, although it has been repeatedly attested by eye-witnesses, and is a well-ascertained historical fact ; I will extract from the drama of Sacontalá, by the poet Calidas, a description of a Yogi, remarkable for its vivid accuracy, or, to use the expression of the German commentator, its fearful beauty. King Dushmanta inquires of Indra's charioteer the sacred abode of him whom he seeks ; and to this the charioteer replies :\* “ A little beyond the grove, where you see a pious Yogi, motionless as a pollard, holding his thick bushy hair and fixing his eyes on the solar orb. Mark :—his body is half covered with a white ant's edifice made of raised clay ; the skin of a snake supplies the place of his sacerdotal thread, and part of it girds his loins ; a number of knotty plants encircle and wound his neck ; and surrounding birds' nests almost conceal his shoulders.” We must not take this for the invention of fancy, or the exaggeration of a poet ; the accuracy of this description is confirmed by the testimony of innumerable eye-witnesses, who recount the same fact, and in precisely similar colours. During that period of wonderful phenomena and supernatural powers—the first three centuries of the Christian church—we meet with only one Simon Stylites, or column-stander ; and his conduct is by no means held up by Christian writers as a model of imitation, but is regarded, at best, as an extraordinary exception permitted on certain special grounds. In the Indian forests and deserts, and in the neighbourhood of those holy places of pilgrimage mentioned above, there are many hundreds of these hermits—these strange human phenomena of the highest intellectual abstraction or delusion. Even the Greeks were acquainted with them, and, among so many other won-

\* We have transcribed Sir William Jones's own words, as given in his translation of Sacontalá.—*Trans.*



ders, make mention of them in their description of India under the name of the Gymnosophists. Formerly such accounts would have been regarded as incredible and as exceeding the bounds of possibility ; but such conjectures can be of no avail against historical facts repeatedly attested and undeniably proved. Now that men are better acquainted with the wonderful flexibility of human organisation, and with those marvellous powers which slumber concealed within it, they are less disposed to form light and hasty decisions on phenomena of this description. The whole is indeed a magical intellectual self-exaltation, accomplished by the energy of the will concentrated on a single point ; and this concentration of the mind, when carried to this excess, may lead not merely to a figurative, but to a real intellectual self-annihilation, and to the disorder of all thought, even of the brain. While on the one hand we must remain amazed at the strength of a will so tenaciously and perseveringly fixed on an object purely spiritual, we must, on the other hand, be filled with profound regret at the sight of so much energy wasted for a purpose so erroneous, and in a manner so appalling.

The second species of Indian philosophy, totally different from the other two kinds, and which proceeds not from Nature, but from the principle of thought and from the thinking self, is comprised in the Nyayà system, whose founder was Gautama—a personage whom several of the earlier investigators of Indian literature, particularly Dr. Taylor, in his Translation of the “Prabodha Chandrodaya” (page 116) have confounded with the founder of the Buddhist sect, as both bear the same name. But a closer inquiry has proved them to be distinct persons ; and Mr. Colebrooke himself finds greater points of coincidence or affinity between the Sanchyà philosophy and Buddhism, than between the latter and the Nyayà system. This Nyayà philosophy, proceeding from the act of thought, comprises in the doctrine of particulars, distinctions and subdivisions, the application of the thinking principle ; and this part of the system embraces all which among the Greeks went under the name of logic or dialectic ; and which with us is partly classed under the same head. Very many writings and commentaries have been devoted to the detailed treatment and exposition of these subjects, which the Indians seem to have discussed with almost the same diffuseness, or at least co-

piousness, as the Greeks. Like the Indians, the learned Englishman who has first unlocked to our view this department of Indian literature, has paid comparatively most attention to this second part of the Nyayà philosophy. But all this logical philosophy, though it may furnish one more proof (if such be necessary) of the extreme richness, variety, and refinement of the intellectual culture of the Hindoos, yet possesses no immediate interest for the object we here propose to ourselves. Mr. Colebrooke remarks, however, that the fundamental tenets of this philosophy comprise, as indeed is evident, not merely a logic in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but the metaphysics of all logical science. On this part of the subject, I could have wished that in the authentic extracts he has given us from the Sanscrit originals, he had more distinctly educed the leading doctrines of the system, and thus furnished us with the adequate data for forming a judgment on the general character of this philosophy, as well as on its points of coincidence with other systems, and with the philosophy of the Buddhists. For although it appears to be well ascertained that the religion of Buddha sprang out of some perverted system of Hindoo philosophy; yet the points of transition to such a religious creed existing in the Indian systems of philosophy, have not yet been clearly pointed out. The Vedanta philosophy must here evidently be excepted; for to this Buddhism is as much opposed as to the old Indian religion of the Vedas. Moreover that endless confusion and unintelligibleness of the Buddhist metaphysics, which we have before spoken of, may first be traced to the source of idealism; though in the progress of that philosophy, many errors have been associated with it—errors even which, in its origin, were most widely removed from it; for every system of error asserts and even believes that it is perfectly consistent, though in none is such consistency found.

The basis and prevailing tendency of the Nyayà system (to judge from the extracts with which we have been furnished) is most decidedly ideal. On the whole we can very well conceive that a system of philosophy beginning with the highest act of thought, or proceeding from the thinking self, should run into a course of the most decided and absolute idealism, and that the general inclination of the Indian philosophers to regard the whole external world of sense as vain illusion, and to represent individual personality as absorbed in the God-head by the most

intimate union, should have given birth to a complete system of self-delusion—a diabolic self-idolatry, very congenial with the principles of that most ancient of all anti-Christian sects—the Buddhists.

The Indian authorities cited by Mr. Colebrooke, impute to the second part of the Nyayà philosophy a strong leaning to the atomical system. We must here recollect that, as the Indian mind pursued the most various and opposite paths of inquiry even in philosophy, there were besides the six most prevalent philosophic systems, recognised as generally conformable to religion, several others in direct opposition to the established doctrines on the Deity and on religion. Among these the Charvacâ philosophy, which, according to Mr. Colebrooke, comprises the metaphysics of the sect of Jains, deserves a passing notice. It is a system of complete materialism founded on the atomical doctrines, such as Epicurus taught, and which met with so much favour and adhesion in the declining ages of Greece and Rome ;—doctrines which several moderns have revived in latter times, but which the profound investigations of natural philosophy, now so far advanced, will scarcely ever permit to take root again.

The third species or branch of Indian philosophy, is that which is attached to the Vedas, and to the sacred revelation and traditions they contain. The first part of this philosophy,—the Mimansâ, is, according to Mr. Colebrooke, more immediately devoted to the interpretation of the Vedas, and most probably contains the fundamental rules of interpretation, or the leading principles, whereby independent reason is made to harmonise with the word of revelation conveyed by sacred tradition. The second or finished part of the system is called the Vedanta philosophy. The last word in this term, “Vedanta,” which is compounded of two roots, is equivalent to the German word *ende* (end), or still more to the Latin *finis*, and denotes the end or ultimate object of any effort ; and so the entire term Vedanta will signify a philosophy which reveals the true sense, the internal spirit, and the proper object of the Vedas, and of the primitive relation of Brahma comprised therein. This Vedanta philosophy is the one which now generally exerts the greatest influence on Indian literature and Indian life ; and it is very possible that some of the six recognised, or at least tolerated, systems of philosophy, may have been purposely



thrown into the background, or when they clashed too rudely with the principles of the prevailing system, have been softened down by their partisans, and have thus come down to us in that state. A wide field is here opened to the future research and critical inquiries of Indian scholars.

This Vedanta philosophy is, in its general tendency, a complete system of Pantheism; but not the rigid, mathematical, abstract, negative Pantheism of some modern thinkers; for such a total denial of all Personality in God, and of all freedom in man, is incompatible with the attachment which the Vedanta philosophy professes for sacred tradition and ancient mythology; and accordingly a modified, poetical, and half-mythological system of Pantheism may here naturally be expected, and actually exists. Even in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and of the metempsychosis, the personal existence of the human soul, inculcated by the ancient faith, is not wholly denied or rejected by this more modern system of philosophy; though on the whole it certainly is not exempt from the charge of Pantheism. But all the systems of Indian philosophy tend more or less to one practical aim—namely, the final deliverance and eternal emancipation of the soul from the old calamity—the dreaded fate—the frightful lot—of being compelled to wander through the dark regions of nature—through the various forms of the brute creation—and to change ever anew its terrestrial shape. The second point in which the different systems of Indian philosophy mostly agree is this, that the various sacrifices prescribed for this end in the Vedas are not free from blame or vice, partly on account of the effusion of blood necessarily connected with animal sacrifice—and partly on account of the inadequacy of such sacrifices to the final deliverance of the soul; useful and salutary though they be in other respects.

The general and fundamental doctrine of the metempsychosis has rendered the destruction of animals extremely repulsive to Indian feelings, from the strong apprehension that a case may occur where, unconsciously and innocently, one may violate or injure the soul of some former relative in its present integrity. But even the Vedas themselves inculcate the necessity of that sublime science which rises above nature, for the attainment of the full and final deliverance of the soul; as is expressed in an old remarkable passage of the Vedas, thus

literally translated by Mr. Colebrooke.\* “Man must recognise the soul—man must separate it from nature—then it comes not again—then it comes not again.” These last words signify, then the soul is delivered from the danger of a return to earth—from the misfortune of transmigration, and it remains for ever united to God ; an union which can be obtained only by that pure separation from nature, which is that sublimest science, invoked in the first words of this passage.

Animal sacrifices for the souls of the departed, particularly for those of deceased parents, which were regarded as the most sacred duty of the son and of the posterity, were among those religious usages which occupied an important place in the patriarchal ages, and were most deeply interwoven with the whole arrangement of life in that primitive period, as is evident from all those Indian rites, and the system of doctrines akin to them. These sacrifices are certainly of very ancient origin, and may well have been derived from the mourning father of mankind, and the first pair of hostile brothers. To these may afterwards have been added all that multitude of religious rites, and doctrines, or marvellous theories respecting the immortal soul and its ulterior destinies. Hence the indispensable obligation of marriage for the Brahmins, in order to insure the blessing of legitimate offspring, regarded as one of the highest objects of existence in the patriarchal ages, for the prayers of the son only could obtain the deliverance, and secure the repose of a departed parent's soul, and this was one of his most sacred duties. The high reverence for women, among the Indians, rests on the same religious notion ; as is expressed by the old poet in these lines

“ Woman is man's better half,  
 Woman is man's bosom friend,  
 Woman is redemption's source,  
 From woman springs the liberator.”

This last line signifies, what we mentioned above, that the son is the liberator appointed by God, to deliver by prayer the soul of his deceased father. The poet then continues ;—“Women are the friends of the solitary—they solace him with their sweet converse ; like to a father, in discharge of duty, consoling as a mother in misfortune.”

\* See Colebrooke's articles on the Vedas in the 8th volume of Asiatic Researches.

We should scarcely conceive it possible (and it certainly tends to prove the original power, copiousness, and flexibility of the human mind,) that, by the side of a false mysticism totally sunk and lost in the abyss of the eternally incomprehensible and unfathomable, like the Indian philosophy, a rich, various, beautiful, and highly wrought poetry should have existed. The epic narrative of the old Indian poems bears a great resemblance to the Homeric poetry, in its inexhaustible copiousness, in the touching simplicity of its antique forms, in justness of feeling, and accuracy of delineation. Yet in its subjects, and in the prevailing tone of its mythological fictions, this Indian epic poetry is characterised by a style of fancy incomparably more gigantic, such as occasionally prevails in the mythology of Hesiod—in the accounts of the old Titanic wars—or in the fabulous world of Æschylus, and of the Doric Pindar. In the tenderness of amatory feeling, in the description of female beauty, of the character and domestic relations of woman, the Indian poetry may be compared to the purest and noblest effusions of Christian poesy; though, on the whole, from the thoroughly mythical nature of its subjects, and from the rhythmical forms of its speech, it bears a greater resemblance to that of the ancients. Among the later poets, Calidas, who is the most renowned and esteemed in the dramatic poetry of the Indians, might be called, by way of comparison, an idyllic and sentimental Sophocles. The poetry of the Indians is not a little indebted to the genius of their beautiful language, which bears indubitable traces of the same generous and lofty poetical spirit; and it may be therefore necessary, in this general sketch of the primitive state of the human mind, to make a few observations on this very remarkable language.

In its grammatical structure the language of India is absolutely similar to the Greek and Latin, even to the minutest particulars. But the grammatical forms of the Sanscrit are far richer and more varied than those of the Latin tongue, and more regular and systematic than those of the Greek. In its roots and words the Sanscrit has a very strong and remarkable affinity to the Persian and Germanic race of languages; an affinity which furnishes interesting disclosures, or gives occasion at least for instructive comparisons, on the progress of ideas among those ancient nations, and, as one and the same word is sometimes extended, sometimes contracted in its meaning or



applied to kindred objects—reveals the first natural impressions, or primary notions of life in those early ages. To prove more clearly, by one or two examples, this affinity between the languages of nations so widely removed from one another, and almost separated by the distance of two quarters of the globe, and to show the important data which the discovery of such facts furnishes to history, I will mention, as a striking instance, that the German word *mensch* (man) perfectly agrees in root and signification with the Indian word *manuschya*, with this only difference, that in the Sanscrit the latter word has a regular root, and is derived from the word *manu*, which means spirit. Thus the word *mensch* (man) in its primitive root signifies a being endowed with spirit by way of pre-eminence above all earthly creatures. It is evident, too, from this, that the Latin word *mens* (mind) is of a cognate kind, and belongs to the same family of words; for, in these philological comparisons, the members of one radical word, scattered through different languages, serve when combined to illustrate each other. To cite an instance of a remarkable extension and contraction of meaning in one and the same word, we may remark that the same word which, in the German *loch*, signifies the space of a narrow aperture, and in the Latin *locus*, comprehends the general notion of space, as well as of a particular place, means the universe in the Sanscrit *lohas*. Thus the Sanscrit word *trailohas*, or *trailokyan*, signifies the three worlds or the triple world—the world of truth or eternal being, the world of illusion or vain appearance, and the world of darkness;—a division which constitutes one of the main points in the Indian philosophy, and is expressed by the two Sanscrit words *trai* and *lohas*, which are at the same time also Latin and German. I will adduce but one more example. As mostly the ancient nations of Asia, and likewise of Europe, were led by a certain natural feeling and a not erroneous instinct, (totally independent of the nomenclature and classifications of our natural history,) to regard the bull, the most useful and important of all the animals which man has domesticated, as the representative of earthly fertility, and (as it were) the primary animal of the earth, and afterwards made that animal the emblem of all earthly existence and earthly energy; so it is extraordinary to see, (as Augustus William Schlegel has shown by an interesting comparison of the words which designate either of these objects

in various languages of a kindred stem), it is extraordinary to see what mutual light and illustration they reflect on each other. The Indian and Persian word, *gau*, with which the German *kuh*, (cow) perfectly coincides, quite agrees with the Greek word for earth, in the old Doric form of *ya*: the Latin *bos* (ox) in its inflection *bovis* or *bove*, belongs to a whole family of Sanserit words, such as *bhu*, *bhuva*, *bhumi*, which signify the earth or earthly, or whatever is remotely connected therewith. So, originally, in this language one and the same word served to denote the earth and the bull. Comparisons of this sort, when not strained by etymological subtilty, but founded on matter of fact and clear self-evident deductions, may offer much curious illustration of the state of opinion, and the nature and connexion of ideas in the primitive and mythic ages, or may serve, at least, to give us a clearer and more lively insight into the secret operations of the human mind, and into the modes of thinking prevalent among ancient nations. And, besides the few instances here cited, we might adduce many hundred examples of a similar kind.

As language in itself forms one of the corner-stones of man's history (and that not the least important), as the different tongues spread in such amazing variety over the inhabited globe, are essentially connected with universal history, and the history of particular races; it is necessary to say a few words on this subject, not that we would plunge deeper than is here expedient, into the vast and immense labyrinth of languages; but in order to show the point of view whence the philosophic historian should take his survey, if he would gain a clear and comprehensive notion of this otherwise immeasurable chaos. Perhaps the shortest way for this would be to figure to oneself all the different dialects and modes of speech diffused over the habitable globe, under the general image of a pyramid of languages of three degrees, separated one from the other by a very simple principle of division. The broad basis of this pyramid would be formed by those languages whose roots and primitive words are mostly monosyllabic, and which either are entirely without a grammar, like the Chinese language, or at best display only the rude lineaments of a very simple and imperfect grammatical structure. The languages belonging to this class, are by far the most considerable in number, and the most widely spread over the four quarters of the globe;

and if, in a general philological investigation, we would wish to reduce these to any species of classification, we must adopt a geographical mode of arrangement, and designate them, for example, as the languages of Northern and Eastern Asia, of America, and of Africa. The Chinese must be considered as the most important and remarkable language of this class, precisely because it best answers to the character of a monosyllabic speech totally destitute of grammar, and has attained to as high a degree of refinement and perfection as languages of this kind are susceptible of. This is the stage of infancy in language, as children's first attempts at speech almost always incline to monosyllables—it is the cry of nature which breaks out in these simple sounds, or the infantine imitation of some natural sound. This primitive character is still to be clearly traced in the Chinese; although a very artificial mode of writing, and the high degree of refinement to which science has been carried, have given a mighty extension, and a quite conventional character, to this infant language. For any parallels or analogies which may be drawn between the periods of natural life and the epochs of intellectual culture must never be understood in an exact and literal sense.

The next degree in this pyramid of speech is occupied by the noble languages of the second class, and this race of languages, which are connected with each other by strong and manifold ties of affinity, are the Indo-Persic, the Græco-Latin, and the Gothico-Teutonic.\* Here the roots are, for the most part at least, dyssyllabic; and these roots, which are by this means internally flexible, and become as it were, living and productive, afford room and occasion for a more varied grammatical structure. The distinguishing character of these languages is a very artificial grammar, which enters so completely into the primary formation of these languages, that the nearer we approach their original, the more regular and systematic do we find their structure. In their progress these languages are characterised by a poetical fulness and variety in the forms of narration, and even by a rigid precision in scientific discussions.

\* These are usually termed the Indo-Germanic race of languages.—*Trans.*



The third and last class are the Semitic languages, as they are styled—the Hebrew and the Arabic, which, together with their kindred dialects, form the summit or apex of this pyramid. In these languages the ruling principle is that all the roots must be tri-syllabic, for each of the three letters, of which the root is regularly composed, counts for a syllable, and is articulated as such. Whatever exceptions from this rule exist, must be treated as exceptions only. It cannot well be doubted that this principle of tri-syllabic roots is purposely wrought into the whole internal structure of these languages, and perhaps not without some deep significance—some presentient feeling implied by that triplicity of roots.\* In these languages the verb is the first principle of derivation—the root from which every thing is deduced; and hence a certain rapidity, fire, and vivacity in the expression. But with such formal regularity the rich, full, elaborate grammatical forms and structure which distinguish the languages of the Indo-Greek race, are not at all compatible; these tri-syllabic tongues have a certain tendency to monotony, and do not certainly possess that poetical variety, and that flexible adaptation to scientific purposes, which characterise the second class of languages. The general characteristic of the Semitic tongues is their peculiar fitness for prophetic inspiration and for profound symbolical import—this is their special character. We speak here of the language itself, and of its internal structure, and not of the spirit which may direct it; and I shall only add that the character we have here assigned to the Semitic languages is, according to the declaration of many of the most competent judges, more uniformly perceptible in the Arabic than in the Hebrew, although the former has received a totally different application, and has undergone a very diversified culture. Thus the Hebrew tongue was eminently adapted to the high spiritual destination of the Hebrew people, and was a fit organ of the prophetic revelation and promises imparted to that nation; and, even in this respect, this Semitic language is worthy of being considered the summit of the pyramid of human speech. But it never can be regarded as the basis of that pyramid, nor the root whence all other tongues have

\* Schlegel here supposes that the triplicity of roots in the Semitic languages contains a mystic allusion to the Tri-une Godhead, the root and principle of all existence,

sprung, as many scholars in former times conceived—an opinion which would seem tacitly to imply that Adam could have spoken no other language in Paradise but the Hebrew. But this language of the first man created by God—this language which God himself had taught him—this word of nature which the Deity imparted to man, together with the dominion over all other creatures, and over the whole visible world, may have been neither the Hebrew nor the Indian, nor any of the other known or existing languages of the earth. Possibly it was not a speech which we could learn or understand, or which, according to the present scheme of language, we can even conceive or imagine. In the same way no one is capable of proving or discovering the geographical site of the one lost source in Paradise, whence those four rivers took their rise, which are in part to be still traced on the earth. As to the Hebrew language, I think that a deeper inquiry would show that it is not so far removed from the Indo-Greek family; and that it is even partially related to it, although this affinity may be at first very much concealed by the great difference of structure, and by the total diversity of grammatical forms. In general, we must not endeavour to enforce, with too rigid uniformity and too systematic precision, the division of languages here marked out. It suffices to adhere to one general point of survey; but in other respects so luxuriant, so various, so irregular, has been the growth of the human mind in the region of languages, that it may be compared to the expansive life of free, uncultivated nature, to the wild variety of the thick-grown forest, or of the flowery meadow.

To the second order of languages of the Indo-Greek race, *probably* belongs the great Slavonian family of languages, which, after the others, would form the fourth member in this class; but a definite and decisive judgment on this matter, I must leave to those philologists who are perfectly conversant with this branch of human speech. Between the second and third class of languages, there are a multitude of intermediate tongues which have sprung up out of that intermixture of races and nations, occurring at all periods of history, and necessarily affecting, more or less, language itself. I allude particularly to such languages as are not perfectly monosyllabic, and which have, nevertheless, a very simple and imperfect, or even a very irregular, strange, and awkward grammatical structure. Such,

for instance, are some of the American languages, which, in this respect at least, cannot be ranked in the third class, while they do not bear a closer, or at all close, affinity to those of the second. Most of the fragments of the earlier languages of Europe, which are still extant, belong to this intermediate class of tongues partaking of both those species, or at least holding a middle place between them. Such are the Celtic or Gælic languages, the Finnish and other ancient remnants of language, which must not escape the study of the philologist, whose judgment is too frequently warped by some patriotic partiality or some learned predilection.

The noble languages of the second class have, from a remote antiquity, become indigenous to Europe, and are there now generally prevalent. The other fragments of speech which are to be found on our continent by the side of these, either bear to them a remote affinity like the various Celtic or Gælic dialects, or lead the inquirer to the great Asiatic, perhaps even to the African, family of tongues; for we could hardly expect to find a native race of languages peculiar to this small quarter of the globe, which holds the lowest place in point of historical antiquity. From the historical connexion between the north of Africa and the southern coasts of western Europe, especially the Hesperian Peninsula (a connexion which has subsisted from the remotest ages, and has been renewed so frequently, and in such various forms), one might be induced to suppose that the existence of this intercourse would have been attested by an affinity between the languages of the two countries. But the ablest scholars and critics cannot trace in the Basque tongue any affinity with the primitive African family, though they can discover in it an analogy with the Scythian race of Finnish languages. The *Magiar* language, at the other eastern extremity of Europe, is most decidedly an Asiatic tongue, belonging to that class which prevails in the central regions of Asia; but in its grammatical structure it bears some analogy to the languages of the second class. If, in conclusion, I might be allowed to hazard a conjecture, I should say that nothing would more materially contribute to a comprehensive knowledge of the whole system of human language, as well as to a deeper insight into its internal principles and structure, than the success of the now rising school of Egyptian philologists, who, in deciphering the hieroglyphics by the aid of the



Coptic, endeavour to give us a more accurate knowledge, or at least a more minute conception, of the old Egyptian tongue. And if we would venture the attempt of approximating nearer to the primitive speech (the lost or extinct source of all languages), we must start from four different quarters, and thread our way, not only through the Sanscrit and Hebrew languages, but through the primitive Chinese and the old Egyptian, as far as we can trace the latter.

How extremely alike ancient Egypt and India were to each other, not only in their political institutions, but in their system of idolatry, in their fundamental doctrines of belief, and in their general views of life, we have had ample opportunity of satisfying ourselves in the present age, when both these countries have been more accurately surveyed, and more closely investigated. In a remarkable expedition which occurred in our own times, this strong religious sympathy was strikingly displayed in a spontaneous and instantaneous burst of feeling. When, in the course of the French war in Egypt, an Indian army in British pay there landed, and, ascending up the country, came before the old monuments of Upper Egypt, the soldiers prostrated themselves on the earth, believing they had once more found the Deities of their native land. Great, however, as the resemblance between the two nations may be, they are still characterised by perceptible differences. On the one hand the Egyptian mind, so far as it has been delineated by the Greeks, appears to have been more deeply conversant and initiated in natural science : and on the other hand, the Egyptian idolatry was of a more decided cast, and was even more material in its fundamental errors than the Indian. The worship of animals, especially, was far more general, and was not confined to the god Apis, who may be compared to the Nandi, the bull sacred to Siva, but branched out into a variety of other forms. In the progress of idolatry it needs came to pass that what was originally revered only as the symbol of a higher principle was gradually confounded or identified with that object, and worshipped, till this error in worship led to a more degraded form of idolatry ; for it should be remembered that as error is not merely the absence of truth, but a false and counterfeit imitation of the truth, it has, like the latter, a principle of permanent growth and internal development. Several writers, who, in a general review of all heathen religions,

have attempted to classify them after the manner of naturalists, assign the lowest place to the Fetish worship (so called), which they rank immediately below the worship of animals. They make the essence of the Fetish worship to consist in the divine adoration of a lifeless corporeal object; while they place on higher degrees, in this scale of pagan error, the sensual nature-worship—the apotheosis of particular men—and the adoration of the elements, the stars, and the different powers of nature. However just and correct this view of the subject may otherwise be, it should be remembered that the question agitated is not only what were the objects of divine worship, but what were the views, intentions, and doctrines connected with that worship. For it is in these moral views we must look, either for the half-effaced vestige of ancient truth, or for the full enormity—the profound abyss of error. When we come to examine more closely the accounts of that Fetish worship (so called) which is most widely diffused through the interior of Africa, and prevails among some American tribes, and nations of the north-east of Asia; it is easy to perceive, that magical rites are connected with it, and that all these corporeal objects are but magical instruments and conductors of magical power; and that the religion of these nations, sunk undoubtedly to the lowest grade of idolatry, comprises nothing beyond the rude beginnings of a pagan magic, such as, in all probability, was practised by the *Cainites*, according to historical indications mentioned in an earlier part of this work. That the Egyptian mind had a certain leaning towards magic, though towards a magic of a very different, more comprehensive, and even more profound and scientific nature, cannot be called in question; for all the Hebrew, Greek, and native vouchers and authorities are unanimous in the assertion.

But if the different religions of paganism must be classed according to their *outward rites* and *outward objects of worship*, the diversity of sacrifices would constitute a far better and more important standard of classification. We are taught that a difference in the mode of sacrifice was the principal cause of the dispute between the first two hostile brothers among men. Although, if we were to judge from first impressions, and according to human feelings, no sacrifice is so filial, so simple, so appropriate, as that of the first fruits of the earth in returning

spring (such, for instance, as the flower-offering of the pious Brahmins, or a similar oblation of thanksgiving among the ancient Persians and other nations); still, on account of their deeper import and typical character, the pre-eminence has ever been allotted to animal-sacrifices; and these among the most civilised nations of pagan antiquity have ever held the foremost place. Of this kind is the great sacrifice of the horse\* in India, where, in ancient times, the bull was offered in sacrifice, till the destruction of the latter animal was severely prohibited, and came to be considered as a grievous crime. But there was ever a symbolical meaning attached to this sort of sacrifice,† and the victim, selected as it was out of the purest and noblest species of domestic animals that surround man (such as the bull, the horse, or the lamb), was looked upon only as the representative of another, and the emblem of a far higher victim.

It is an error to consider ancient paganism as nothing more than mere poetry or agreeable fiction. The rites of the ancient polytheism had very distinct and practical objects in view; and were intended either to *propitiate* the malignant powers of darkness, or to obtain by their agency preternatural power; or, on the other hand, to conciliate the favour and appease the anger of the Deity. And for this object the heathens shrunk from no expedient—deemed no price—no victim too costly, as the existence of human sacrifices, and especially the sacrifice of children may serve to convince us; and I cannot conclude this first part of the ancient history of the world, without bestowing a more particular examination on this extreme aberration of paganism, which passed by inheritance from the remoter ages to the second, more civilised, and (in many respects), milder era of history. The species of human sacrifice most widely diffused among all the Phœnician nations was that in which the idol Moloch, heated from below, grasped in his glowing arms the infant victim. Even in the Punic city, Carthage, this cruel custom long prevailed, and was for a long time

\* The Aswamedā.

† The reader may derive both pleasure and instruction from the perusal of a most masterly Treatise on Sacrifices, by the late Count Maistre, inserted at the end of the 2nd volume of “*Soirées de St. Petersbourg.*” Nowhere have the learning, the eloquence, the bold and profound philosophy of the noble author been more strikingly displayed, than in that short but admirable tract.—*Trans.*



secretly practised under the Roman domination. These sacrifices existed among the Greeks and Romans, no less than among the Indians and Egyptians; and the Chinese, so far at least as my acquaintance with their authentic records extends, are the only people among whom I do not recollect meeting with any mention of this kind of sacrifice. But in the civilised states of Greece and Rome, this ancient custom was, in later and milder times, gradually abolished, or silently supplanted by some equivalent.

Besides the sacrifice of children, there was another species which was customary and particularly striking, and in one respect even more worthy the historian's attention—I mean the sacrifice of pure youths. I may here again enforce the maxim which I have before laid down—namely, that error is the most appalling when it is connected in its origin, or mixed up in its principle, with some confused notion—some profound, though obscure, feeling of the truth. Bearing this in mind, we shall find that the enigmatic lamentation of Lamech\* over his mysterious slaying of a stripling, occurring in the Mosaic account of the Cainites, would seem to indicate that human sacrifices, and especially this particular kind, had their origin among the race of Cain, deeply imbued, even at that early period, with anti-Christian errors; and that an unhappy delusion—a confused anticipation of a real necessity and of a future reality, contributed to the institution of these sacrifices. Of that great mystery of truth, which the holy patriarch of the Hebrews, with a prophetic intuition, had discerned in the sacrifice of his well-beloved son commanded him by God, but through the divine mercy not consummated—of this great mystery, we say, a diabolic imitation may have led to the human sacrifices by the early heathens. But these sacrifices were more widely diffused, even in the Druidical North, and they continued down to a much later period than is commonly supposed, or at present asserted. Thus, for instance, the

\* “And Lamech said to his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech; for I have slain a man to the wounding of myself, and a stripling to my own bruising.—GEN. iv., 23. This obscure text has long perplexed the commentators:—Schlegel, I think, has furnished an explanation as solid as it is ingenious. Thus Lamech to whom the introduction of polygamy is generally ascribed, was probably, also, the founder of human sacrifices. According to our great poet lust sits enthroned hard by hate.—*Trans.*

anti-Christian Emperor Julian sought to revive them, in order to promote the infernal purposes of his dark magical rites. We are so habituated to look on the divinities and beautiful fables of ancient Greece, as the fairy creations of poetry, that we are painfully surprised when we unexpectedly stumble on some historical fact, which discloses the true spirit and internal essence of polytheism—the fact, for instance, that Themistocles himself, the deliverer of Greece, offered up three youths in sacrifice.

The profound abyss of error, in which the most civilised nations of ancient heathenism had sunk and were lost, becomes the more apparent, the more closely it is investigated, and the more fully it is understood. And on this account, we should learn to see how necessary and salutary was that slow progression—that gradual preparation for a brighter futurity, wherein, as I above stated, consisted the peculiar destination and spiritual career of the Hebrew people. It is only from this, its peculiar destination for the future, the Hebrew people presents so high an interest to historical philosophy, and holds the lofty place assigned to it in the first period of human civilisation. The later destinies of the Jewish nation, and the particular events and characters in their later annals, are subjects of the highest moment in a history of religion; for they can be rightly understood and fully appreciated only by their practical application, and profound symbolical reference to the circumstances of Christianity. But it is only the political constitution of the Jewish state in the earliest period of its history—a constitution which was so peculiar and unique in itself, so entirely without a parallel—that can be the appropriate subject of consideration in this general review of history; because this constitution was connected with the prophetic calling of the Hebrew people, and even bore a prophetic character itself. This constitution has been called a theocracy, and so it was in the right and old signification of that word, by which was meant a government under the special and immediate providence of God. But in the now ordinary acceptation of the term, which implies a sacerdotal empire or dominion, the Jewish state was at no time and by no means a theocracy. Moses was no more a priest than a king; and after him all those men of Desire, as they were called from the first circumstances of their institution, or men of the

desert, because after a preparation in the solitude of the desert, they led and conducted the people in a literal or figurative sense, through the wilderness—all these men appointed by God, and without any other title or insignia but the staff, which as pilgrims they brought out of the desert, governed and directed the people under the immediate providence of God. If, on a certain occasion, one of the prophets girded on the sword, and led out an army—this was only a transient instance ; and the prophets in general were nothing more than the men of God, and the divinely-appointed conductors of the people. When the wish in which the Hebrews had so long indulged of having a king, like the heathen nations, was at last gratified ; a wish which, in the higher views of Holy Writ, was regarded as the culpable illusion of a carnal sense ;—the last of the prophets formed a party, and constituted in a very peculiar and singular manner, a species of political opposition, which was acknowledged to be, and was in fact, perfectly legitimate and just. And when some of them, like Elias for instance, had received from God the supreme and immediate power over life and death, as the distinct badge of dominion ; we cannot wonder that men should have followed them, the people have been at their bidding, and kings themselves, even though they followed not always their counsels, have hearkened at least to their warning voice. If those who are so fond of playing the part of oppositionists in every country could only once rise superior to vulgar forms and formulas, and not everywhere seek for the echo of their modern opinions, an attentive study of the character of Elias would hold up to their admiring view an oppositionist, who, in energy of conduct, and in burning zeal for the cause of truth and justice, or in other words, of God, could not be perhaps easily equalled by any historical personage whether of ancient republics, or of modern monarchies.

After the Jewish state had become a kingdom of no very great dimensions, it shared the destiny of most of the petty states of those regions ; and was first a province of the Assyro-Babylonish empire, then became subject to the Persian monarchs, afterwards to the Greek kings of Syria and Egypt, till, with these, it was finally swallowed up in the vast empire of all-conquering Rome.

In that restoration of the Jewish state which the Maccabee



accomplished in the last period of the Greek domination over Judea, the high-priest acquired a concurrent political power ; a power which he even still retained under the oppressive protectorate of the Romans, though his functions, which were those of a legislator and supreme judge, were confined to the internal government of the state. But this does not constitute a really sacerdotal dominion, and the term theocracy is as little applicable to such an order of things, as to the Greek Patriarchate in the Turkish empire. However, the holy city of Jerusalem, along with Solomon's old, mighty and symbolical temple (whose deep import and proper signification the Jews themselves at a later period no longer understood), still continued to be the main centre of the old national existence and ancient recollections of the Hebrews, as well as of their future hopes and prophetic promises. Even after the fearful destruction of Jerusalem, this emblematic idea of the holy city still lived in the recollection of mankind, and a long time afterwards was, in Christian Europe, an animating incentive to the warlike nations of the middle age.

In conclusion, we must add some observations, referring not so much to the Jewish people and their history, as to their most ancient historical books, and to those general views of mankind which they contain, so far as such views relate to the general history of the primitive ages, and are connected with the philosophy of history. In the same way it is neither necessary nor practicable to regard the Hebrew tongue as the general root or primal source of all the languages spoken on the earth, because it was the organ of divine revelation ; so the Mosaic genealogy of nations can with as little propriety be made the basis of a general history of the world, as has in earlier times been so often attempted, but never accomplished without much violence to the text. Although it would be difficult to find in the primitive records of the other Asiatic nations an historical survey of all the nations on the globe, at once so clear, luminous, and instructive ; yet the Mosaic revelation had a far different object in view than to furnish a school-compendium of historical learning. This historical genealogy, which in its way cannot be too highly esteemed, was evidently destined by Moses more immediately for his own people, and his own book of the law ; and in his account of the origin of nations, the sacred historian pro-

ceeded on views and principles very different from ours. For instance, with us it is the affinity of languages, which forms the chief clue in the arrangement and classification of the different races of mankind; and, according to this principle, we rank the Hebrews with the Phœnicians, and regard them as kindred nations. But in the Mosaic history these two nations, separated by mutual hostility, stand at the widest distance one from the other; for in manners, religion, and feelings, they were diametrically opposed.

In this investigation, indeed, historical circumstances may often occur—such as the popular commotions and intermixture of nations happening at all periods of the world—by which the question of the origin and affinity of different races undergoes considerable modifications, and the whole subject is rendered unsusceptible of a systematic division and arrangement. It often happens that one race adopts the language of another, without on that account losing its national identity, or being totally confounded with the other; for, on the contrary, its moral or intellectual character bears the clear traces of its original descent; so that here, at least, language alone will decide nothing. Often a less numerous tribe will stamp its own native moral and intellectual character on a whole people. In general the descent of nations can be clearly traced and demonstrated in those cases only where the race has been kept up pure, and all marriage and connexion with other nations been strictly prevented. But such has been the case among certain nations only; and even in those countries, where it was the law, it was not in every instance rigidly observed, nor constantly maintained; as is exemplified in the frequent intermarriages of the Hebrews with the Phœnicians, severely prohibited as such intermarriages were. The ancient lawgivers attached, indeed, a very high importance to lineage, as is proved by all those restrictive laws on marriage, which were destined to preserve the purity of descent; but they set a far higher value on the patrimonial inheritance of ancient customs, institutions, doctrines, and intellectual qualities, as constituting the true essence of national character, and determining the rank which one race should hold above another. By Moses, in particular, this intellectual character of the different races—their feelings—modes of thinking—the whole spirit which animated them; in a word, the chain of sacred

tradition, and its transmission and preservation among the different nations—all these are regarded of primary importance, and they alone furnish us with a clue to the discovery of his views.

The great middle country in Western Asia, where the true Eden, the original abode of the first man, and great progenitor of mankind, was situated, forms the central point in the general historical survey of Moses. The wide-spread race of Japhet comprehends the Caucasian nations in the north, and all its contiguous regions, and also those in the central Asia;—nations which were sound, vigorous, comparatively speaking, less corrupt, and by no means entirely barbarous: but which were debarred from that near and immediate participation in the sacred traditions of primitive revelation, enjoyed by the people of the Semitic race in that midland country, whose distinctive character and high pre-eminence, according to Moses, consisted in this very participation. To the south, the race of Cham includes the degenerate, corrupt, and ungodly Egypt (a country which in its native language bore the name of Chemi), and beyond this, all the African tribes devoted to the dark rites of magic. How entirely subjective in itself—how exclusively adapted to his own people, and his own national object, is the genealogy of nations by Moses, may be proved among other things by the fact that, while many great nations in remoter lands, or in the distant Eastern Asia, cannot, in this historical survey, be traced without difficulty to their proper place, or forced therein without violence to the text, twelve or thirteen generations are given of the kindred Arabian branch, or of the hostile Phœnician race. If regarded in this simple point of view, the Mosaic genealogy of all the nations throughout the inhabited globe will be found very clear, and, though the names of some particular races remain matter of doubt, this summary is in general perfectly intelligible, and throws a broad light on the history of mankind.

END OF LECTURE VI.



## LECTURE VII.

General Considerations upon the Nature of Man, regarded in an Historical Point of View, and on the Two-fold View of History.—Of the Ancient Pagan Mysteries.—Of the Universal Empire of Persia.

INSTEAD of the Mosaic genealogy of nations, commented on in a hundred different ways, and interpreted according to the received views of each individual—a genealogy which was considered as the necessary basis of every universal history, and which by the most false and arbitrary methods was violently strained into an adaptation to all the data of history, evidently contrary to the real views and mighty object of its inspired author;—instead of this genealogy, we say, the sacred records of divine truth furnish us with a far more profound principle, a principle highly simple and comprehensive, and which is perfectly applicable to the philosophy of history. That is that principle laid down in that revelation, at the commencement of all history, as the one wherein consists the peculiar nature—the true essence—and the final destiny of man—I mean his likeness to his Creator. Now it is this principle which forms the ground-work of our whole plan—and now that we have reached the conclusion of the first period of history, and are about to pass to the second, it may be proper to examine more minutely the nature of this principle, and to give an accurate definition of it.

According to the different notions entertained of man's nature, there are but two opposite views of history—two mighty and conflicting parties in the department of historical science. It is quite unnecessary to observe that we include not, in either class, such writers as, confining themselves to a bare detail of facts, indulge not in any general historical views, or even such as, vacillating in their opinions, have no clear, definite, and consistent views on the subject. According to one party, man is merely an animal, ennobled and gradually dis-

ciplined into reason, and finally exalted into genius ; and therefore the history of human civilisation is but the history of a gradual, progressive, and endless improvement. This theory may, in a certain sense, be termed the liberalism of historical philosophy ; and no one perhaps has developed it with such clearness and mathematical rigour, as a very celebrated French writer, entirely possessed with this idea, and who indeed became in his time a martyr to these principles.\*

In the contests of opinion, which embrace the general relations of society, it is far less those dogmas in which each individual seeks light, aid, strength and repose for his feelings and his conscience, his inward struggles and his final hopes—than the single article of faith respecting man, and what constitutes his essential being, his internal nature, and his higher destiny, which determines the Christian or unchristian view—the religion or irreligion of history, if I may be allowed the expression. This principle of the endless perfectibility of man has something in it very accordant with reason ; and if this perfectibility be considered as a mere possible disposition of the human mind, there is doubtless much truth in the theory, but it must be borne in mind that the *corruptibility* of man is quite as great as his perfectibility.

But when this system is applied to the general course of history, it is destitute of any real beginning ; for this vague notion of an animal capable of infinite improvement is not a beginning of any series of terms ; and in philosophy, as in life and history, there is no true and solid beginning for any thing out of God. And this principle is equally destitute of any right end ; for a mere interminable progress is not a fixed term nor positive object. But history presents a mass of stubborn facts, which agree not always with this abstract law of an infinitely progressive perfection, and, on the contrary, the annals not only of particular nations, but of whole periods of the world, would prove that the natural march of humanity lay rather in a circuitous course. This disagreeable fact is utterly inexplicable according to the rationalist system of history—or if it be susceptible of explanation, it certainly is not reconcilable with the liberal view. As often as from the path of endless perfectibility, thus mathematically traced out for them, man and mankind swerve in eccentric deviations ; or

\* The author alludes to Condorcet.

even should their course, like that of the planets of our heaven at stated periods, be in appearance once retrogressive ; the historical inquirer, who starts from this principle, is immediately disconcerted by such a course of events so contrary to his theory ; and, in his blind indignation in which he involves alike the present and future, as well as the past, and by the false light of the passionate spirit of time, he pronounces on these a judgment most iniquitous, or at best extremely partial, certainly at least most repugnant to the dictates of truth.

But man is not merely a nobler animal, fashioned by degrees to reason or dignified into genius. His peculiar and distinctive excellence—his real essence—his true nature and destiny consist in his likeness to God ; and from this principle proceeds a view of history totally different from that we have just described ; for, according to it, man's history must be the history of the restoration of the likeness to God, or of the progress towards that restoration. That this sublime origin of man being once supposed—the divine image has been much altered, impaired, and defaced in the inmost recesses of the human breast, both of man in particular and of mankind in general, is a truth we may learn, independently of the positive doctrine of religion ; for clearly is it vouched and confirmed by the testimony of our own feelings, our own experience of life, and a general survey of the world. No man who well knows that the image of God has been stamped on the human soul—an image, whose old, half-obliterated characters are still to be found on all the pages of primitive history, and whose impress, not utterly effaced, every reflecting mind may discover in its own interior—can ever forego the hope, that, much as that divine image may seem, or may in fact be, impaired, its restoration is still possible. The man who knows from human life, and from his own experience, how great and arduous is this work—how many obstacles oppose its accomplishment, and how easily, even after a partial success, what already appeared won, may be again lost ;—the man understanding this, will not be at a loss to comprehend any pause or retrogression, real or apparent, in the march of mankind ; he will judge the fact with more equity, and consequently more accuracy ; and will, in every case, confide in the guidance of that superior Providence, clearly visible in this regeneration of the world. If, in



opposition to the rationalist theory of man's endless perfectibility, we were to designate the opposite system of history founded on man's inborn likeness to his Maker, as the *legitimacy* of historical philosophy; this title would not be incorrect, since all divine and human laws and rights, as they are found in history, depend, in their first basis, on the supposition of the high dignity and divine destination of man. Hence this view of history is the only one which restores to man the full rights and peculiar prerogatives of his being. Even to all other truths it restores their full force and rights; and it alone can do so without detriment to its own principle; for, as this is the simple truth, it is, therefore, complete and comprehensive. It must even acknowledge that man, beside his higher dignity and divine destiny, is and remains in his outward existence a physical creature—and though he be such not in an exclusive, but only secondary and subordinate sense, still, in respect to his external being and external development, he may be subject to certain natural laws in history. In the same way, it may admit that man endowed with freedom, even when he rejects the religious principle, is still a being gifted with reason; a being that consequently on this foundation incessantly works, builds, and improves, in good as in evil, essentially, interminably,—we might almost say, fearfully progressive. This legitimate philosophy of history, which proceeds from the high, divine point of view, should be, as far as the limited capacity of man will permit, a recognition and a just appreciation of the truth, and thereby become a science of history—that is to say, of all which under Providence has occurred to the human race. Thus it must by no means adopt a view of life and of the world, transcending the true right and the right truth—it must avoid deviating into *ultraism*—though this term of the present day involves in the expression of a true idea, some inaccuracy and misconception. On the contrary, this religious view of history and of life, precisely because it is such, can never in its historical judgments sanction a spirit of harsh, precipitate, unqualified censure. For as the Mosaic doctrine of the divine image stamped on the human soul, forms the real and distinctively Christian theory of man, and consequently of his history; so this evidently implies, that among all the laws of human conduct, emanating from this Christian theory, and from Christianity itself, the law of love is the first

and the greatest:—a law which must retain its full force and efficacy not only in life, but in science also. Yet love or charity is by no means incompatible with firmness of principle—the vacillations of judgment proceed only from indifference to, or the utter absence of, all principle—the tomb of love, as well as of truth.

This divine image implanted in the human breast is not an isolated thought—a transient flash of light, like the kindling spark of Prometheus: nor is it a mere Platonic resemblance to the Deity—an ideal speculation of the human mind soaring beyond the range of vulgar conception. But, as this likeness to God forms the fundamental principle of human existence, it is interwoven with the internal structure of human consciousness; and the triple nature of the soul is intimately connected with the principle of the divine resemblance. In its state of discord, the human consciousness, in its external operations, pursues four opposite paths of direction towards reason (*Vernunft*), or imagination (*Fantasie*), or understanding (*Verstand*), or will (*Wille*), so long as these faculties remain disunited. But, when consciousness is restored to its primitive harmony, the internal life of man is threefold in mind, soul, and sense; and to expound and demonstrate this truth, was the purport and object of the *Philosophy of Life*, which I treated of in a former course of lectures. And this triple nature of spiritual life, which, among all creatures, characterises man alone, is most closely allied with the triple energy and personality of the one Divine Being, and constitutes, as far as the immeasurable distance between the creature and Creator will permit, the wonderful analogy between weak, mutable man, and the infinite Spirit of eternal Love. But the original harmony of human consciousness—the triple nature of spiritual life, can be restored in individual man by the following means only:—the soul, previously distracted, can regain its unity, or become again whole, only by a divine illumination;—when this light—the first ray of hope—is humbly received and imbibed by the soul. Enlightened by this first incipient ray, the mind, the living mind, no longer now a cold, dead, abstract understanding, is enabled to embrace with faith the pure word of truth (which is one with love), and to comprehend this word aright, and, by this word, to comprehend the world and its ownself:—while the understanding, in its former isolated and ab-

stract state, was both internally and externally distracted and divided between the phantasmata of nature and the endless sophisms of contentious dialectic. When thus the strong hand of all-guiding love, hath loosed the Gordian knot which bound the human consciousness in inextricable folds ;—the third fundamental faculty in man—the sense for divine things—is then awakened and excited. This is now no longer a mere passive feeling for divine things—a will undetermined, or incapable of good ; but it becomes an energy acting on life—an energy which is itself life and deed.

But the progressive march of social man, which constitutes the subject of universal history, or, as we term it, the formation and growth of humanity, are regulated by principles somewhat different from those which determine the internal life of individual man. Here the different stages of development cannot be classed according to the three fundamental faculties of consciousness in individual man ; but the principle of development must be sought for in the divine impulse, as the same is attested by history, and which, in every stage of social progress, has been to mankind the source of a new life ; though here again, from the very nature of things, three marked degrees of social advancement occur. Corresponding to the divine image implanted in the breast of individual man—the main subject of all history—the word of divine truth originally communicated to man, and which the sacred traditions of all nations attest in so many and such various ways, forms the leading clue of historical investigation and judgment, during the first stage of the progress of society. But in the second stage of social development, which must be fixed in that full noon-day period of refinement, when victorious power shines forth so conspicuously in the ascendancy obtained by nations, to whom universal pre-eminence was accorded—the right notion of this power, or the question how far it were just and godly, or pernicious in its application—whether it were inimical to God, or at least of a mixed nature—must constitute the true standard of historical investigation. In the third or last stage, however, of this progress, which occurs in the modern period of the world, the pure truths of Christianity as they influence science and life itself, alone can furnish the right clue of historical inquiry, and can alone afford any indication as to the ulterior advances of society in future ages ; thus then the *Word*, the *Power*, and the *Light*, form the



three-fold divine principle, or the moral classification of historical philosophy—a classification which is founded on historical experience and historical reality.

The existence of a primitive revelation—the establishment of Christianity, which was the principle and power of a new moral life in society—and the pre-eminence of modern Europe in civilisation, in which she outshines all other portions of the globe, and even in many respects most periods of antiquity, are three historical data—three mighty facts in civilisation, which evince the successive stages of human progress and improvement. And it is our task to appreciate in their full extent each of those different degrees of social advancement, and to comprehend and explain them aright in their relative bearings to the whole. That the Christian nations and states of Europe have received, along with the light of divine truth, a high intellectual, moral, and political illumination, no one will deny; and it is equally evident that this vital principle of modern society is still involved in the crisis of its development—a crisis which will form the principal subject of historical inquiry in the latter part of this work.

It is equally undeniable that, in the second period of the world, to which I now pass, each of those nations that attained to universal empire at that epoch displayed a high intellectual or moral energy. This energy was visible in that strong, deep sense of nature, which characterised the old ancestral faith and pure manners of the ancient Persians, and in that high martial enthusiasm, and fervent patriotism, which it so easily inspired. The power of inventive genius in the sciences, and in the fine arts, none can deny to the Greeks; none can dispute their pre-eminence in these; as, on the other hand, the Romans were equally unrivalled in vigour of character, and in that moral energy of will, which they exhibited in all their contests with other states. Here now the question to be asked is, whether that high intellectual and moral energy accorded to those nations, thus gifted with universal dominion, were always well employed: whether that power, exalted as it was, were truly divine, or what were the earthly and pernicious elements intermixed with it;—whether this power, great and wonderful as it was in its way, were in itself adequate to the moral and intellectual regeneration of degraded humanity; or, whether a power of another, far purer and higher nature were

requisite to this end. I should think I had amply solved the problem involved in the history of that first period of the world, which I have here brought to a close, if, in this brief historical sketch, I have succeeded in proving the existence of an original revelation to mankind—the primitive word of divine truth—whereof we find the clearest indications and scattered traces in the sacred traditions of all the primitive nations—traces which, when viewed apart, appear like the broken remnants, the mysterious, and, as it were, hieroglyphic characters—of a mighty edifice that has been destroyed. I should think, too, I had fully accomplished my task, if I have succeeded in proving that, however much amid the growing degeneracy of mankind, this primal word of revelation may have been falsified by the admixture of various errors, however much it may have been overlaid or obscured by numberless and manifold fictions, inextricably confused and disfigured almost beyond the power of recognition; still a profound inquiry will discover in heathenism many luminous vestiges of primitive truth.

For the old heathenism (and we must add this remark as the result of our inquiries), the old heathenism had a foundation in truth, and, thoroughly examined and rightly understood, would serve for a confirmation of the same; for the profound researches of recent times on ancient mythology, and its historical sources, though conducted with the most opposite views, lead us more and more to this great end and result of all the knowledge of antiquity, or at least very near it. Were it possible, or could we succeed in separating the pure intuition into nature and the simple symbols of nature, that constituted the basis of all heathenism, from the alloy of error, and the incumbrances of fiction; those first hieroglyphic traits of the instinctive science of the first men would not be repugnant to truth and to a true knowledge of nature, but would offer, on the contrary, an instructive image of a freer, purer, more comprehensive, and more finished philosophy of life. For, if man, who is the highest and most central object of nature on the earth, had not possessed in the beginning an instinctive science and immediate insight into nature, he could never have attained to this knowledge by the resources of art, and by all the aids of instruments and machinery, or have acquired thereby a true understanding of nature, her internal life, and her hidden powers. The symbolical error which

has produced mythology, and which has again emanated from mythology—I mean the identification of the symbol with the object itself, of which, as the latter was something higher and more mysterious, the former originally was, and should have been, nothing more than the mere explanatory emblem—the symbolical error is comparatively the most excusable; and for a being constituted like man, whose soul is divided between figurative fancy and discursive reason, is almost natural, and has grown into a psychological habit, and a second nature. This error would never have arisen, if the confusion of the high and of the low, of the principal and of the inferior, of God and of nature, and the inversion of the due order of each, had not, in a partial degree at least, previously taken place. The fundamental error of paganism lay in the sensual idolatry of nature, by which that inversion of things, and with them of all moral doctrines, took place; although this destructive error of materialism is to be found not only in the heathen religion, but in the atomical philosophy and other false systems of science. Besides that sensual deification of nature, which was the predominant principle in the mythology and popular religion of the ancients, there was another and capital error—magic, which was a dark and abusive application—an illicit perversion of the high powers of nature, when these were really understood, and the mind, penetrating through her sensible and external veil, had caught her true spirit and internal life. This loftier, and, on that account, more dangerous error was not so prevalent in the popular and poetical religion of antiquity, but was chiefly to be found in the secret associations of the pagan mysteries.—Although these mysteries which, in Greece, as well as in Egypt, exerted such a mighty influence on public opinion, on science, and on the whole system of thinking, nay, on life itself, disclosed far graver and profounder doctrines than the vulgar mythology of the poets, on all the great questions relative to the human soul, its capacity and original dignity, as well as to the hidden powers of nature and the whole invisible world; still we must not imagine that the influence of these mysteries was always salutary, or that their internal constitution and ruling spirit were in their ultimate tendency always entitled to commendation. We may, in my opinion, ascribe to the Egyptians much science, especially in physics, more, perhaps, than the Greeks in general, and the Pythagoreans in particular,



had, as far as we yet know, learned and borrowed from them ; but we must not imagine this Egyptian science to have been exempt from a gross alloy of error, and the various abuses of magic. When once the sacred standard and clue of truth are lost, when the due order of things and of doctrines is once inverted, then the mind of man often associates the sublime, the mysterious, and the wonderful, with the mean, the perverse, and the wicked. Amid all those false and whimsical images of gods, the mere symbols of nature, but at least very equivocal emblems and hieroglyphs, the temple sleep of the Egyptians might easily nourish illusions of error and visions of darkness ; especially where a magical spirit prevailed, that is to say, an illicit purpose in the application of the high powers of nature—and a will instigated to evil by the arts of the demon. And in all science the matter of greatest moment, and that which determines its value, is its relation to the higher and divine truth ; that is to say, whether this science be well employed, or whether, on the contrary, it be converted to a corrupt and destructive use ; whether the due order and subordination of inferior nature, and of every thing earthly, towards God and the things of God, which are the principal, be rightly observed and maintained. But this fundamental truth being once supposed, all science, even that which penetrates the deepest into nature and her most hidden springs of life, can conduce only to the greater glory of the mighty Author of nature. All these natural secrets, and their true explanations, are to be found in various passages, notices, and allusions in the Old Testament, especially in the books of Moses ; they are, indeed, to be found there, like so many golden grains of science in full weight, but, scattered and dispersed, they serve at once to adorn and point out the path that leads to an object, ever regarded as the most important in Holy Writ—namely, the revealing to man the wonderful ways of Divine Providence in the conduct of the human race—the holy ark of the covenant of divine mysteries and promises, if I may be allowed such an expression. Here every thing is subordinate to religion, every thing ministers to this higher object—and this is the distinctive mark and stamp of truth, even in the investigations of nature, and of its revealed or hidden mysteries.

How a slight deviation from truth may suffice to give birth in time to a mighty and progressive error, is strongly exempli-

fied in the fundamental doctrine of the ancient religion of Persia—a doctrine which was at first nothing more than a simple veneration of nature, its pure elements and its primary energies—the sacred fire, and above all, light—the air, not the lower atmospheric air, but the purer and higher air of heaven—the breath that animates and pervades the breath of mortal life. In India, too, this doctrine must have been very prevalent in the primitive ages ; for many and very ancient passages of the Vedas refer to these elements, while, on the other hand, the names of the later Hindoo divinities appear to have been entirely unknown at that period. This pure and simple veneration of nature is perhaps the most ancient, and was by far the most generally prevalent in the primitive and patriarchal world. In its original conception, it was by no means a deification of nature, or a denial of the sovereignty of God—it was only at a later period that the symbol, as it so often happens, was confounded with the thing itself, and usurped the place of that higher object which it was destined originally to represent. And how can we doubt that these pure elements and primitive essences of created nature would offer to the first men, who were still in a close communication with the Deity, not indeed a likeness or resemblance (for in man alone is that to be found), nor a mere fanciful image, or a poetical figure, but a natural and true symbol of divine power :—how can we doubt this, I say, when we see that, in so many passages of Holy Writ (not to say in every part), the pure light or sacred fire is employed as an image of the all-pervading and all-consuming power and omnipotence of God? Not to speak again of those passages of Scripture, which describe the animating breath and inspiration of God as the first source of life, and speak of the gentle breath, the light whisper of the breeze that announced to the prophet the immediate presence of his God, before whom he fell prostrate, and mantled himself in awe and reverence ; and this surely cannot be understood as a poetical and figurative expression ! Undoubtedly, the Scriptures often oppose to that natural emblem or veil of divine power, in the pure elements, an evil, subterraneous and destructive fire—the false light of the fiends of error—the poisonous breath of moral contagion. And how could it be otherwise ? Nature in its origin was nought else than a beautiful image—a pure emanation—a wonderful creation—a sport of omnipotent love ; so, when it was severed

from its divine original, internally displaced, and turned against its Maker, it became vitiated in its substance, and fraught with evil. This alienation of nature from God, this inversion of the right order in the relations between God and nature, was the peculiar, essential, and fundamental error of ancient paganism, its false mysteries, and the abusive application of the higher powers of nature in magical rites. On the other hand, we ought to regard every similar inversion of things and of ideas, every similar derangement in the divine system, though established on the basis of Christianity, and by Christian philosophers—we ought, I say, to regard every such attempt as being in its essential nature and principle a heathen enterprise—the foundation of a scientific paganism, although no altars be erected to Apollo, and no mysteries be celebrated in honour of Isis.\*

The pure symbolism of nature, and the whole circle of the primitive symbolical ideas of the Egyptians, several of the Greek writers attempted to gather out of the mass of idolatrous tenets, natural emblems, and hieroglyphic signs of speech; but their researches do not correspond to the importance of the subject itself, nor to the present demands of science. It is well worthy of remark that the hieroglyphics, as far as they have yet been deciphered, do not indicate in their formation that variety of epochs observable in the Chinese system of writing; but, on the contrary, they seem to be all of a single cast, and offer the same circle of ideas and the same style of emblems. And as images of gods are to be found in a diminutive form among the other hieroglyphic signs, we may conclude from this circumstance, that all the hieroglyphics must have had a simultaneous origin, and have remained subsequently unchanged; and that their origin must have occurred at a time when the Egyptian idolatry had already been wrought into a perfect system.

In the primitive ages, during the first thirty-three centuries of the world, according to the ordinary computation, the various nations into which mankind were divided, followed in their development a separate and secluded course; and two mighty nations, the Indians and the Chinese, have remained to this day in this isolated and totally sequestered state. The

\* This is an allusion to the Pantheistic Naturalism of Schelling.—*Trans.*



peculiar character which distinguishes the second from the first epoch of the world is that, along with the first mighty conquests, there existed a much closer connexion, a mutual influence, an active commerce, and various intercourse among many nations, nay, among all the nations of the then civilised world. From this period, when the intercourse among nations becomes more intimate, history acquires greater clearness, precision, and critical exactness; and this is only six, or at most seven centuries before the Christian era. The first Persian conquerors advanced with rapid strides towards the objects of their ambition; for after the founder of the Persian empire—Cyrus, had made himself master of the whole central region of Western Asia, as well as of the Lesser Asia, his successes were soon followed up by the conquest of Egypt by the arms of Cambyses; and a little subsequent to this, by the great expedition of Xerxes into Greece, whose valiant defenders, however, ruined his hopes of conquest. Egypt, which in its intellectual character, civilisation, and political institutions, had a much stronger analogy and affinity with those two great primitive states—India and China, shut out from the rest of the world, was engaged in political relations with the nations of Western Asia, and those inhabiting the shores of the Mediterranean, such as the Persians, the Phœnicians, and the Greeks; and hence a short sketch of its political history, down to the period of the Persian conquest, as far at least as is necessary for the elucidation of general history, will not be here inappropriate or misplaced.

The long list of names of kings, belonging to more than twenty dynasties of the ancient Pharaohs, furnishes, indeed, matter of little interest or importance to the philosophic inquirer in his researches on universal history. It is, however, worthy of remark that many and vast expeditions appear to have been undertaken in the early ages of Egypt; though, while mention is made of such conquests, nothing is said of the permanent possession of the conquered countries. Sesostris, who, in the lifetime of his father, Amenophis, had seized the whole coast of Arabia, next vanquished, for the first time, Lybia and Ethiopia, afterwards extended his conquests to Bactriana, subdued the Scythian nations in the Caucasian countries, in Colchis, and as far as the Don, and even took possession of Thrace. The descent of the Colchians from the Egypt-

tians, or the existence of an Egyptian colony in Colchis, was regarded by the ancients as an historical fact. The yet more ancient King Osymandas is said to have undertaken an expedition attended by an immense army to reconquer Bactriana, that had revolted against the Egyptian sway ; and the triumphant arms of Osiris stretched on one hand as far as the Ganges, and on the other as far as the sources of the Danube. Here a question arises :—did the Egyptians possess heroic poems similar to the Ramayana and Mahabarata of the Indians, and were these marvellous narratives extracted from these poems ? Or had all these narratives a signification purely mythic, as we may easily conjecture to be the case in the expedition of Osiris ? In those historical ages which are better known to us, Egypt was certainly never a conquering power—at least its conquests were never of a solid and permanent nature ; though even in those times Egypt made some transient conquests, or at least expeditions ; and, guilty of great political encroachments on other states and nations, was often doomed to experience from these a vigorous resistance to her attempts. A part of Lybia, the coast of Arabia contiguous to the Red Sea, and the Arabia Petræa, acknowledged for a long time the sceptre of the Pharaohs, (and this fact indeed, the various monuments covered over with hieroglyphics, which are found in those countries, would seem to corroborate) : Ethiopia, too, or at least a considerable portion of that region, was for a long period in the possession of the Egyptian kings. The construction of the many ancient and vast edifices and monuments which are crowded together in the province of Thebais must, to all appearance, have required a greater number of hands than the Proper Egypt (a country by no means of considerable extent) could have furnished of itself. As Ethiopia had been conquered by the Egyptians, so the Ethiopians in their turn invaded Egypt, and founded there a royal dynasty. The second of these Ethiopian kings, Tirhaka, sought to stretch his conquests as far as Libya and the northern coast of Africa, and must have penetrated as far as the columns of Hercules, or the modern straits of Gibraltar. On the other hand, there is historical evidence that even the Carthaginians, at the time when the family of Mago had the ascendancy in their state, conquered and took possession of the Egyptian city of Thebes. The king of Egypt, who is known in the

historical books of the Hebrews by the name of Shishak, and who made the transient conquest of Jerusalem, is called Sheshonk or Sesonchis in the ancient inscriptions of the Pharaohs.

It is worthy of remark, that we find, in the old Egyptian monuments, pictures of war-scenes representing very strangely-formed, or at least very remote, nations, as captives of war, and among these, we distinguish some with red hair and blue eyes, tattooed on the legs, perfectly corresponding to the descriptions which many ancients have left us of the Scythian nations. At a much earlier period, a nomade tribe of Phœnician, or, more probably, Arabian descent, had taken possession of the throne of Egypt, and had established in that country the national dynasty of the Hycsos, that is to say, the shepherd-kings. Some have wished to connect these with the Israelites; but in the whole history of the latter—the hospitable reception of the Hebrew colony under Joseph—its subsequent oppression—and its final expulsion from Egypt in the time of Moses, we can find no trace of any such dominion of a pastoral nation of Hebrews, or of any dynasty founded by them in Egypt; and even other circumstances agree not at all with such a supposition. With the neighbouring nations and tribes, Egypt had manifold and various relations, which, though in some particulars they might be similar, were far from being identical. If it is proved that Sesostriis ascended the throne immediately after his father had succeeded in expelling the Hycsos, it may fairly be presumed that as an internal revolt against a foreign power and a foreign dynasty is wont to enkindle a spirit of martial enthusiasm, which easily leads to ulterior and more vigorous undertakings; the expeditions and conquests of Sesostriis, though ever so much exaggerated, are not entirely destitute of historical foundation. Thus much is certain, that in antiquity there existed in many places, comparatively remote from Egypt, whole colonies, especially of a sacerdotal kind, whose origin was undoubtedly Egyptian; and that the first colonies which carried arts and civilisation into Greece, and the other countries bordering on the Mediterranean, did not come solely from Phœnicia; for even in Greece, the genealogy of many royal families and ancient cities, as well as most, if not all, the mysteries, particularly the Orphic, pointed to Egypt as their common parent. And it is very possible that in those early ages, in which these



Egyptian expeditions are said to have been undertaken, armed colonies may have emigrated from Egypt, not always influenced, however, by those commercial views which invariably directed the colonists of Phœnicia; but animated by those higher motives of religion, which, for example, had such an evident influence on the first Persian conquests—by a desire to diffuse the mysteries, and thereby, while they bound to Egypt the then still barbarous nations of the West, to raise the latter to the more exalted scale of Egyptian civilisation. Even domestic troubles and civil discord may have been instrumental in producing those distant emigrations, which at this distance of time appear to us so mysterious and unaccountable. Such civil discord, indeed, existed in Egypt under various forms. The country itself was often divided into several kingdoms; and even when united, we observe a great conflict of interests between the agricultural province of Upper Egypt, and the commercial and manufacturing province of the Lower; as, indeed, a similar clashing of interests is often to be noticed in modern states. In the period immediately preceding the Persian conquest, the caste of warriors, that is to say, the whole class of the nobility, were decidedly opposed to the monarchs, because they imagined them to promote too much the power of the priesthood; in the same way as the history of India presents a similar rivalry or political hostility between the Brahmins and the caste of the Cshatriyas. In the reign of the Egyptian King Psammetichus, who had first checked or repelled the Scythian nations whose victorious arms then menaced the whole of Asia, the disaffection of the native nobility obliged this prince to take Greek soldiers into his pay; and thus at length was the defence of Egypt intrusted to an army of foreign mercenaries. This circumstance, as well as the great commercial intercourse with the Greeks, and the number of Greek settlements in Lower Egypt, had made this province half Greek, even prior to the Persian conquest; and had paved the way and opened the door to this, as well as to the later, conquests by the Greeks; for, in general, states and kingdoms, before they succumb to a foreign conqueror, are, if not outwardly and visibly, yet secretly and internally, undermined.

The classical writers of antiquity begin, in general, their universal history by an account of the Assyro-Babylonian em-

pire, which preceded the Medo-Persian, and the annals of the early mythic ages of this empire are embellished with the fabulous victories of Semiramis; as similar fictions indeed are to be found in the primitive Sagas of all the other Asiatic nations. However, the conquest of Media by Ninus appears to be more historical. The simplest, and for that reason, the most correct view of the subject is this, that in this great central region of Western Asia, four countries were contiguous, which often formed separate empires—Babylon and Assyria, Media and Persia; and which, when united, were governed sometimes by one, sometimes by another province, according to the country to which the ruling dynasty belonged; while the different capitals of these four countries, Babylon, Ninive, Ecbatana, Susa, or Persepolis, alternately formed, during their flourishing period, the centre of a great empire. This first Assyro-Babylonian universal monarchy, as it is called, should not be considered as a distinct period of history, but rather as the most ancient dynasty of a great Asiatic empire, which was succeeded by a second, the Medo-Persian dynasty; in the same way as the successors of Alexander the Great founded in this very country a new Greek kingdom, and as at a later period the Parthians, whose original seat lay to the north-east, re-established in this land a native sovereignty, that proved very formidable to the Romans. This great middle country of Western Asia is the native seat of conquest; it was hence that emanated the spirit of ambition and enterprise, which found, indeed, in the very situation of the country most extraordinary facilities. And it is here, too, that Holy Writ places the abode of the first universal conqueror—the cradle of all ambition and conquest. In the very place where the ancient Babylon stood there are now immense ruins, to which the inhabitants of the country give the name of Nimrod's Castle, and which involuntarily bring to the modern traveller's mind the old history of the Tower of Babel; as these ruins, in all probability, formed a part of the great Temple of Belus, which in eight lofty stories rose to a prodigious height, and on the pinnacle whereof stood a colossal idol of the national divinity—the sun. Even now the ruins of this temple, piled in immense heaps one upon the other, and which seem as if glazed by some raging fire, produce a very profound impression on the mind; and to such a height do they rise, that the clouds rest on their

summit above, while lions couch on the walls, or haunt the caverns below. Here, too, we look for the place where were the vast terraces, with their hanging or floating gardens, as the ancients called them, and which in a country by no means abounding in wood, the Assyrian monarch constructed from affection to his Median spouse. Here the widely-scattered heaps and mounds of brick, inscribed with the cuneal characters of Babylon, attest the existence and vast circumference of the mighty capital, of whose dimensions no European city, but the Asiatic cities only, can furnish an adequate idea. This Babylonish tower has been in every age a figure of the heaven-aspiring edifice of lordly arrogance, which sooner or later is sure to be struck down and scattered afar by the arm of the divine Nemesis; and in Holy Writ itself, the Babylon giddied by the intoxicating cup of ambition, drunk with the blood of nations, is a mighty historical emblem, applicable to every age from the earliest to the latest times, of the mad, people-destroying career of a pagan pride. Here did the evil commence, although the first Assyrian empire had no very extensive influence on the nations westward, and although the real epoch of universal conquest dates from the Persian Cyrus. Yet the ancient Babylon contrived to maintain her power, for, as has so often been exemplified in history, she, by the moral contagion of her voluptuous manners, conquered her conquerors, who abandoned the gods of their ancestors, to embrace the sensual nature-worship of the Babylonians. In the new monarchy founded by Cyrus, the Persians (now the ruling nation) were closely united, and politically, at least, incorporated with the once more powerful Medes. Yet their race and language were originally very different, and even at a later period we can still observe some traces of mutual jealousy in a change of dynasty, or the forcible dethronement of the prince. The institute of the Magi, which Cyrus established in his new Persian empire, served, outwardly at least, to cement this union; for the Magi were of the Median race, and their sacred zend-books were not composed in the Persian language, but in two distinct dialects of Media, if one, indeed, were not rather Bactrian. The Magi were not so much an hereditary sacerdotal caste, as an order or association divided into various and successive ranks and grades, such as existed in the mysteries—the grade of apprenticeship—that of mastership—that of perfect mastership. Fo-



reigners could not easily gain admission into this sacerdotal order ; and it was only at the express solicitation of the King of Persia, at whose court he resided, that this extraordinary favour was accorded to Themistocles. Whether the old Persian doctrine and *system of light*\* did not undergo material alterations in the hands of its Median restorer, Zoroaster ; or whether this doctrine were preserved in all its purity by the order of the Magi, may well be questioned. It is certain, at least, that that primitive veneration of nature is found completely disfigured and corrupted in the small existing remnant of the sect of Guebers, or fire-worshippers.

On the order of the Magi devolved the important trust of the monarch's education—a trust which must necessarily have given them great weight and influence in the state. They were in high credit at the *Persianges*—for that was the Oriental name given to the capital of the empire, and the abode of the prince ; and they took the most active part in all the factions that encompassed the throne, or that were formed in the vicinity of the court. In Greece, and even in Egypt, the sacerdotal fraternities and associations of initiated, formed by the mysteries, had in general but an indirect, though not unimportant, influence on affairs of state ; but in the Persian monarchy, they acquired a complete political ascendancy. The next main pillar of the Persian monarchy was its nobility, or the principal race of the Pasargads, who immediately surrounded the throne, enjoyed the highest prerogatives, and formed indeed the flower of the Persian army. The strict moral and military education which this nobility received, and of which Xenophon has drawn such a beautiful ideal sketch, constituted the chief strength of the state. And certainly the neglect of this old Persian system of education was one of the primary causes of the decline of the empire—a decline which the progressive relaxation and corruption of public morals accelerated with a fearful rapidity. After the first mighty impulse, and that severe moral character which Cyrus had imparted to Persia, had disappeared, the same fate befel this empire, as has befallen all the great Oriental monarchies. The same evils, which the domination of provincial satraps—a government of the seraglio—invariably bring along with it—the factions, the conspiracies, the changes of dynasty, and the other disorders incident to

\* In the German “*Lichtsage*,” or Tradition of Light.—*Trans.*

despotism, appear in exactly similar colours in the Persian annals ; and even in the modern kingdom of Persia, we find many of those characteristic traits or usages of Asiatic government as they existed in the ancient empire. Even the army, for the most part, consisted of troops levied out of the conquered nations, and the greater were its numbers, the less internal union did it possess. Hence we can well conceive that a small army of Greeks, animated by patriotic valour, and commanded by generals possessed of a true tactical eye and genius, were able to oppose to the immense hosts of Persia a resistance, which, in a numerical point of view, appears almost incredible, and were even enabled to gain unexpected victories over their enemies. We can conceive too, how, in the time of Alexander the Great, three battles should have decided the fate of this great empire ; for its moral life and energy were gone, and the pillars of the state were completely decayed.

The Persian empire lasted but for the short period of two hundred and twenty years, from its foundation by Cyrus, to the reign of the last Darius, whose personal character and fate leave such an affecting and tragical impression on our minds. The universal conquests of the Persians, rapid, but transient, acted on the age with all the violence of the elemental powers of nature. Sudden and rapid, like a wind-storm, they invaded and subdued all other states and kingdoms :—the expedition of Xerxes into Greece was a real inundation of nations—and as the destructive fire, after blazing on high and desolating and consuming all things around, sinks quickly again—it was so with the Persian empire. The dominion of the Persians exerted no very permanent influence on those other nations whose civilisation was anterior to their own. Egypt, in despite of the violent persecution which she sustained under Cambyzes, remained still the ancient Egypt—and with yet greater fidelity did she cling to her ancient customs, under the milder sway of the Ptolemies, whose government was so much more congenial to her spirit and character. Phœnicia, Palestine, and Asia Minor, also remained essentially unchanged. In an historical point of view, the main result of the Persian conquests was this—they brought the nations of Western Asia and of Egypt into a close contact, and a very active and permanent intercourse with the states of Greece, and those situated on the shores of the Mediterranean. The Persian dominion, and the contest

of that power with Greece, had indeed a very great, though only indirect, influence on the latter country, inasmuch as it favoured the growth and development of Grecian liberty, and at a later period produced the great reaction under Alexander the Great. This Greek re-action was, in its spirit and character, somewhat similar to the previous irruption and ambitious invasion of the Persians; in Alexander at least, we can clearly discover an Oriental spirit, that not content with the narrow boundaries of his hereditary kingdom of Macedon, sought to transcend the sphere of Hellenic civilisation, Hellenic doctrines, and Hellenic modes of thinking. And I call that an Asiatic enthusiasm which, with resistless impetuosity, bore away the Macedonian to the capital of Persia, and even beyond the banks of the Indus.

END OF LECTURE VII.



## LECTURE VIII.

Variety of Grecian Life and Intellect—State of Education and of the Fine Arts among the Greeks—The Origin of their Philosophy and Natural Science—Their Political Degeneracy.

It would be difficult to point out a more striking difference, a more decided opposition in the whole circle of the intellectual and moral character and habits of nations, as far at least as the sphere of known history extends, than that which exists between the seclusive and monotonous character of Asiatic intellect—the generally unchangeable uniformity of Oriental manners and Oriental society, and the manifold activity—the varied life of the Greeks, in the first flourishing ages of their history. This amazing diversity in the moral and intellectual habits of the Greeks appears not only in their legislation, their forms of government, their manners, occupations, and usages of life, but in their various and widely dispersed settlements and colonies, in their descent, which was composed of so many heterogeneous elements, in the first seeds of their civilisation—as well as their distribution into hostile tribes and great and petty states, and even in their traditions, their history, and the arts and forms of art to which those gave rise—finally, in a science, engaged in incessant strife, and marching from system to system, amid the noise and tumult of opposition. In Asia, even in those countries such as India, where the poetry, the views of life, and the systems of philosophy were extremely various, and bore in this respect an external resemblance to those of Greece; where even the country in ancient times was never permanently united into one compact empire; yet the whole way of thinking, the prevalent feeling, was entirely monarchical, proceeding from, and returning again to, unchangeable unity. On the other hand, in Greece, science, like life itself, was thoroughly republican—and if we meet with particular thinkers, who leaned to this Asiatic doctrine of unity,

we must regard this as only an exception—a system adopted from a love of change, or out of a spirit of opposition to the vulgar and generally received opinion that all in nature and the world, as well as in man, was in a state of perpetual movement, constant change, and freedom of life. Even the fabulous world of Grecian divinities, as it has been painted by their poets, has a republican cast; for there every thing is in a state of change, of successive renovation, and of mutual collision in the war of nature's elements, in the hostility of old and new deities—of the superior and inferior gods—of giants and of heroes—presenting, as it does, a state of poetical anarchy. Hence, even the historical traditions of the Greeks, and the first accounts of their early seats, settlements, and the migrations of their different races, present to the eye of the historical inquirer a dense forest of truth and fiction, of fanciful conjecture, absolute fable, and ancient and venerable knowledge—a labyrinth of poetry and of history, in whose various and intricate mazes it is often difficult for the critic to find the true outlet, and to hold fast by the guiding clue of Ariadne, when he wishes to adopt a lucid arrangement, and assign to each part its due place in the system of the whole. The Greek tribes and nations inhabited not only the proper Greece, the Peloponnesian Peninsula, the contiguous islands, the southern plains of the Continent (on whose northern frontiers it is often difficult to draw the line of demarcation between the tribes of Greek and foreign extraction); and also the western coasts of Asia Minor; but they had founded a number of small states and planted many flourishing colonies in the remotest corners of the Euxine, in the Lower Egypt, where, long prior to the Persian wars, many Greek settlements existed—along the northern shore of Africa, where the flourishing Cyrene was situated, on the southern coasts of Spain and Gaul, in Sicily, and throughout the whole of Southern Italy. Their navigation extended even to the Baltic, as the voyage of Pytheas evinces; and, though they did not circumnavigate Africa,—a thing which it is still doubtful whether the Phœnicians accomplished,—they rather surpassed than yielded to the latter nation in the activity of their trade, and the wealth and extent of their colonies. The stupendous monuments and edifices of the Egyptians are indeed of more colossal dimensions; yet the works of Grecian sculpture and archi-

ture, while some of them are on a very large scale, are incomparably more various, more rich in ornament, more animated, and beautiful, than those of Egypt. The Greeks were not a mere seafaring and commercial people like the Phœnicians; nor did they compete with the Egyptians in those proud monuments of architecture whose erection required such thousands of human hands; but they were from their earliest period a martial people, well trained to war. Independently of every feeling of patriotic enthusiasm and national defence, they looked on war as a trade and a living, and they loved it accordingly. This is proved by the fact that, in the age preceding the Persian conquest, and long before the Persians waged war with Greece, the kings of Egypt had not only Greek squadrons in their service, but that the whole Egyptian army was for the most part composed of Grecian mercenaries. Such, too, was the case in Carthage, and, at a later period, in Persia, where whole legions and armies of Greeks were engaged in the service of the great king. This old custom among the Greeks of enlisting in the military service of foreign states, may have been indeed an excellent preparation for their great national wars, though in these the first great exploits were achieved by small companies of troops from Athens, Sparta, and other free states, as well as by a select body of free citizens. But this custom could have had no very unfavourable influence on national opinions and feelings, and the mutual relations of the Greek tribes and states.

The republican form of government mostly prevailed in the various Greek settlements and colonies, established round the shores of the Mediterranean; for it is to this species of government that maritime nations, commercial cities, and petty states almost always incline, as long as their territories remain circumscribed. Yet in these states, we find a great variety of political constitutions; for along with that multitude of small commercial republics, there were many, like Sparta and others, that depended exclusively, or for the most part, on agriculture and the riches of the soil. In these, the hereditary nobility, the proprietors of the soil, formed the principal class; for in general the Greeks attached a very high importance to the noble races and princely families that deduced their descent from the old heroic times. The original constitution of many, of almost the greater part of these small Greek republics, was a tolerably



mild aristocracy, headed by an hereditary prince, or chieftain. In some states, as for instance in Athens, the transition from this old aristocratical government, headed by an hereditary prince, to a thoroughly democratic constitution, was but slow and gradual; as the memory of their ancient kings, for example, of Codrus, who fell in the defence of his country, was ever cherished by the Athenian people with love and reverence. The popular hatred in Athens was directed only against those leaders of the state who, like Pisistratus, after having obtained their power by means of popular influence, sought to stretch and perpetuate it by force of arms and the use of foreign mercenaries. Yet even Pisistratus possessed great qualities, and his sway was in general mild, and conformable to the laws of Solon;—it cannot be denied, however, that this was an usurped authority, and one founded on illegitimate force. At a later period, and when the Athenian state became more and more democratic—as there is not a more thankless being in all nature than the sovereign people, in its lawless and capricious rule, the people of Athens, jealous of their freedom, and too easily deluded by the arts of oratorical sophistry, pointed their hatred at all the great men and deserving citizens of the state. The general Miltiades perished in prison; Aristides the Just, Cimon and many others, fell the victims of ostracism, and died in exile, as did the great historians, Herodotus and Thucydides. Themistocles himself, who had been the liberator of Athens and of Greece, was obliged to take refuge at the court of the Persian monarch, from whom he received protection and hospitality. The wisest of the Athenians, the master of Plato, who had ever proved himself an honest citizen and a valiant defender of his country, received the cup of poison for his recompense.

But we nowhere discover in the early ages of Athens, and of the other Greek republics, that hatred to kings and to royalty in general, which even the primitive history of Rome displays. Nay, in Sparta, amid a republican constitution, the kingly power and dignity were preserved inviolate down to the latest period; while in Macedon a new monarchy grew up, which at first asserted a sort of protectorate over the other states, and at last established a very despotic ascendancy over all Greece. Even in those states where the constitution was more democratical, that is to say, where it was founded, not on

an hereditary nobility and the possession of the soil, but chiefly on moveable property, on trade, and manufactures, we must not look for that sort of arithmetical freedom and equality which exists in some modern republics, for instance, in the United States of America. The number of citizens really free, eligible, and possessed of the right of suffrage, was exceedingly small when compared with the bulk of the population—by far the greater part were not so, and a multitude of bought slaves, especially in the commercial states, was employed in manufactures, and in the tillage of the land. This universally prevalent custom—the harsh treatment and oppression of slaves—forms a very painful contrast in the ancient republics, little corresponding to our own ideal of social happiness, and in itself very degrading to humanity. In the interior and more aristocratic states, slavery assumed another shape—the remnant of the original inhabitants of the soil, that had survived the conquest of their country, such as the Helots of Sparta, and the Penestæ of Thessaly, were not merely reduced by the conquerors in their newly-founded governments to the condition of vassals, as we should term them, or even of serfs; but were degraded to a state of absolute slavery, and generally treated with great severity. If we except this one circumstance, the aristocracy, that ruled in most of the ancient republics of Greece, was, on the whole, tolerably well constituted; a number of accessory circumstances had tended to soften its sway, and even in some instances it was ennobled by high worth. Ancestral manners and customs—the very smallness of the states—all tended to mitigate its rule—a wise legislation, like that of Solon, and of other lawgivers animated by the same spirit, had at once consolidated and tempered its power; while it was adorned by republican virtues, and many personal qualities in those elder and better times, ere the ancient simplicity of manners was yet totally corrupted.

In most of the Greek republics, besides, commerce daily acquired greater influence and importance, and it was impossible in such a state of things that any rigidly exclusive aristocracy could have been formed, or could have long maintained its ascendancy. Even the priesthood in Greece (for there was no danger of the political predominance of an hereditary sacerdotal caste, as in Egypt),—even the priesthood, by maintaining ancient manners, customs, and laws, on which,

indeed, their own existence depended, exerted a mild and beneficial influence in the state ; for they at least formed a counterpoise to a mere selfish aristocracy, and sometimes opposed the last barrier to democratic tyranny.

The mysteries, too, in particular, which, although they did not at a later period, as in their origin, diffuse a sounder morality than the popular mythology, yet certainly inculcated more serious doctrines, and more spiritual views of life, exerted, together with the Olympic and Isthmian games, a gentle, and on the whole, a very beneficial influence, and served as a bond of connexion between the variously divided and discordant nations of Greece. Nay, these public and gymnastic games, which were celebrated in the festive poetry of the Greeks, served to knit more firmly the bond of national union, so exceedingly loose among this people ; and many times, in a moment of danger, has the oracle of Delphi roused and united all the sons of Hellas. These political decisions of the oracle were not false, so far at least as in these critical moments they gave no other council to the Greeks, but that of patriotic courage, prudent firmness, and national concord.

Widely dissimilar as were the Greek tribes and nations in their original seats and settlements, their occupations, and modes of living, their manners and political institutions, they differed not less in the primitive elements of their civilisation. The Phœnician Cadmus, according to tradition, brought the alphabet, and with it, undoubtedly, many other elements of knowledge to the city of Thebes—the Egyptian Cecrops laid the ground-work of the old Athenian manners and government—the Thracian Orpheus, though his doctrines had much analogy to those of Egypt, founded the widely diffused mysteries that bore his name, while he sought by song to mitigate the terrors of the lower world, and to overcome the powers of darkness. To these many other names might be added ; and among them many which did not deduce their descent, like most, indeed, from Phœnicia and Egypt, but are clearly to be traced, as well as the doctrines and sacred customs they introduced, to the North ; and, though they sprang more immediately from Asiatics on the northern side of the Caucasus, they were nearly allied to the nations dwelling further towards the north and west. The profound and concurrent researches of many modern scholars have adduced such numerous and repeated proofs from



antiquity, of the existence of this northern stratum in Greek antiquities, that this branch of Grecian history, formerly neglected, must no longer pass unobserved. The Greeks were of very various extraction ; and in the different countries of Greece we may distinguish, along with the Hellenes, two, if not more, principal nations, clearly distinct from the former. These were the Thracians in the northern provinces, or at least in those immediately contiguous—a race for the most part of northern descent, and, together with the Indian, the most numerous on the earth, according to Herodotus—perhaps of the same origin with the nations on the banks of the Danube, or even those further northward. There were, next, the Pelasgi, the real aborigines of Greece, the authors of those gigantic walls and constructions, which are known in Italy by the name of Cyclopean, and in Greece by that of Pelasgic, and some of which still exist, besides several others that existed in the Peloponnesus, and which are mentioned by the ancients. These aborigines, or this primitive race of people, occur in many countries under the same, or at least, very similar, traits—to them we must ascribe those monuments of architecture we have just spoken of, a certain knowledge of metals, some rude religious rites, without any mythology, which was only of later origin, nay, without any names of specific divinities ;—human sacrifices—manners and customs, if not absolutely savage, still very rude and barbarous, and a constant restlessness and disposition to roam. Deucalion alone is to be considered as the ancestor of the Hellenes, as all the noble families of kings and heroes derived their descent from him, and the later tribes of Greece, the Æolians, the Dorians, and Ionians, took their names from his sons. According to every indication, this people would appear to be a Caucasian race of Asiatics, of Indian, or at least of a cognate, origin. When these Hellenes, Æolians, and Dorians, had taken possession of Thessaly, of the adjacent countries, and the Peloponnesus, and had there formed settlements, the Pelasgi were everywhere dispossessed, or oppressed, and thrown into the background. But they certainly were not entirely extirpated, nor did they emigrate in full numbers ; and it is beyond a doubt that various causes contributed to unite the old and new inhabitants of Greece ; for here intermarriages were not entirely prohibited and rigidly prevented, as in India or Egypt, by the

institution of castes ; and the two nations were gradually formed into one race and one people, according as the circumstances or situation of one country or the other favoured such an union. And hence we can understand why Herodotus, for example, should have attributed to the Ionians in particular much that was Pelasgic, as if under this new denomination they were in all essential points the ancient Pelasgi, or had mingled more with the latter, and were not of such a pure Hellenic race as the Dorians ; for in other respects, the Pelasgi and Hellenes are represented as being originally two perfectly distinct nations. The people of Thrace, too, although they continued as a separate nation to a much later period, undoubtedly mingled considerably with the Hellenic tribes that inhabited the borders of Thrace, or that lived among the inhabitants of that country.

The primitive inhabitants of Greece were, in general, extremely rude and barbarous in their manners and tenets ; until the noble race of Prometheus, the sons of Deucalion, who had come from the regions of Mount Caucasus, and colonies still more civilised that had emigrated from Phœnicia, Egypt, and other countries of Asia, exerted their beneficial influence, and gave by degrees an entirely new form and fashion to the people of Greece, and even to the country itself. For that region, which afterwards presented so beautiful an aspect, which was so richly endowed, and splendidly embellished by the hand of nature, was, until it had been well cultivated and fertilised, and until the power of boisterous elements had been subdued, a complete wilderness, and the scene of many violent revolutions of nature ; which were very naturally considered as a sort of partial and feeble imitation of the destructive and universal flood of elder times, when water was the all-prevailing element on the earth. In Greece there was an old obscure tradition, of the original existence of a continent called Lectonia, which occupied a portion of the subsequent Greek sea, and of which the islands form now the only existing remains ; the rest of the continent having been sunk and destroyed, at the very time when the Black Sea, which had been originally connected with the Caspian, burst through the Bosphorus, and precipitated its waves into the Mediterranean. At this very remote period, all Thessaly was one vast lake, till, in a natural catastrophe of a similar

kind, the river Peneus burst its way through a defile of rocks, and found an outlet into the sea. The lake Copais in Bœotia in an inundation overflowed the whole circumjacent flat country in the time of Ogyges; and thus the name and tradition of Ogyges served afterwards to designate the epoch of those early floods. At a later period, and when the civilisation of the Greeks was more advanced, in the true flourishing era of their power and literature, the two principal races among this people, the Ionians and the Dorians, were completely opposed to each other in arts and manners, in government, modes of thinking, and even in philosophy. Athens was at the head of the Ionic race; Sparta took the lead in the Doric confederacy; and this internal discord did not a little contribute towards the utter ruin of Greece, and towards the consummation of that internal and external anarchy that dragged all things into its abyss.

Now that we enter upon that period when all the great political events have been sufficiently described, and partly, at least, set forth with incomparable talent, by the great classical historians of antiquity; by a multitude of writers that have borrowed from that source, or have worked upon those lofty models; it would be idle to repeat what is universally known, and to recount, in long historical detail, how, after contests and struggles of less importance, the glory of Greece burst forth in all its lustre in her resistance to Persian might; how, soon after, she exhausted her best strength in the great Peloponnesian civil war betwixt Sparta and Athens, and how both those states ruined themselves in the idle ambition of maintaining the *ηγεμονια* as they called it, or the superiority and preponderance in the political system of Greece;—how, after the short dominion of the Thebans under their single great man, Epaminondas, the Macedonians became lords of the ascendant, and ruled for a long time with despotic sway;—and, finally, how Greece obtained an apparent freedom under the generous protection of Rome, and was soon after reduced to a state of permanent vassalage under her prefects and her legions:—this instructive and, we may well say, eternal history, may be read, studied, and meditated on in all its ample details and living clearness in the pages of the great classical historians of antiquity. The knowledge of all these historical facts must be here pre-supposed, and I must confine myself to a rapid and lively sketch of



the intellectual character and moral life of the Greeks, in their relation to the rest of mankind, and according to the place which they occupy in universal history.

In this point of view, all that is universally interesting in the character, life, and intellect of the Greeks will be best and most easily classed under three categories. The first is the *divine* in their system of art, or the mythology that was so closely interwoven with their traditions and their fictions, their whole arrangement of life, their customs, and political institutions; and which so much excites our astonishment and admiration. The second is their science of nature—a science so natural to them, and which embraced all the objects of nature and the world, as well as of history, and even man himself, with the utmost clearness of perception, sagacity of intellect, and beauty and animation of expression—a science that, from its earliest infancy down to its complete perfection in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, has established the lasting glory of the Greeks, and has had a deep and abiding influence on the human mind, through all succeeding ages. The third and last category, in this portrait of the Greek intellect and character, is the political rationalism in Greece's latter days, founded on those maxims and principles which had finally triumphed after the most violent contest of parties, and under which the state was entirely swayed by the arts of eloquence and the power of rhetoric, now become a real political authority in society. All that can be said truly to the honour of the ancient Greek states, and their republican virtues, has been briefly noticed above. Their decay and general anarchy, and final subjugation by Rome, may be well accounted for by the decline of the Greek philosophy, and the consequent corruption of morals and doctrine—by that dominion of sophists, unparalleled at least in ancient history, whose pernicious art of a false rhetoric was the bane of public life, government, and all national greatness.

The marvellous and living mythology in the glorious old poetry of Greece justly occupies here the first place; for all arts, even the plastic arts, had their origin in this first Homeric source. And this fresh living stream of mythic fictions and heroic traditions which has flowed and continues to flow, through all ages and nations in the West, proves to us, by a mighty historical experience, which determines even the most difficult problems (and this has been universally acknowledged in Christian Europe),

that all classical education—all high intellectual refinement, is and should be grounded on poetry—that is to say, on a poetry which, like the Homeric, springs out of natural feelings and embraces the world with a clear, intuitive glance. For there can be no comprehensive culture of the human mind,—no high and harmonious development of its powers, and the various faculties of the soul,—unless all those deep feelings of life, that mighty, productive energy of human nature, the marvellous imagination, be awakened and excited, and by that excitement and exertion, attain an expansive, noble, and beautiful form. This the experience of all ages has proved, and hence the glory of the Homeric poems, and of the whole intellectual refinement of the Greeks, which has thence sprung, has remained imperishable. Were the mental culture of any people founded solely on a dead, cold, abstract science, to the exclusion of all poetry; such a mere mathematical people—with minds thus sharpened and pointed by mathematical discipline, would and could never possess a rich and various intellectual existence; nor even probably ever attain to a living science, or a true science of life. The characteristic excellence of this Homeric poetry, and in general of all the Greek poetry, is that it observes a wise medium between the gigantic fictions of Oriental imagination, even as the purer creations of Indian fancy display; and that distinctness of view, that broad knowledge and observation of the world, which distinguish the ages of prosaic narrative, when the relations of society become at once more refined and more complicated. In this poetry, these two opposite, and almost incompatible, qualities are blended and united—the fresh enthusiasm of the most living feelings of nature—a blooming, fertile, and captivating fancy, and a clear intuitive perception of life, are joined with a delicacy of tact, a purity and harmony of taste, excluding all exaggeration—all false ornament—and which few nations since the Greeks, none perhaps in an equal degree, certainly none before them, have ever possessed to a like extent.

This poetry was most intimately interwoven with the whole public life of the Greeks—the public spectacles, games, and popular festivals were so many theatres for poetry; nay music and the gymnastic exercises were the ground-work, and formed almost the whole scope, of a high, polite, and liberal education among the Greeks. Both were so in a very wide, compre-

hensive, and significant sense of the term. The gymnastic struggles, the peculiar object of the public games, and where the human frame attained a beautiful form and expansion by every species of exercise—the gymnastic struggles had a very close connexion with, and may be said to have formed the basis for, the imitative arts, especially sculpture, which, without that habitual contemplation of the most exquisite forms afforded by these games, could never have acquired so bold, free, and animated a representation of the human body. Music, or the art of the Muses, included not only the art of melody, but the poetry of song. Still the plan of Grecian education and refinement was ever of too narrow and exclusive a character ; and when at a later period, rhetoric came to form one of its elements, the Greeks considered it (what indeed it never should be considered) as a sort of gymnastic exercise for the intellect, a species of public spectacle, where eloquence, little solicitous about the truth, only sought to display its art or address in the combat. And in the same way philosophy, when the Greeks attained a knowledge of it, came to be regarded, according to the narrow and exclusive principles of their system of education, as nothing more than a species of intellectual melody, the internal harmony of thought and mind—the music of the soul ; till later, by means of the sophists, and popular sycophants that deluded their age, it sunk into the all-destructive abyss of false rhetoric, which was the death of true science and genuine art, and which, in the shape of logic and metaphysics, had as injurious an influence on the schools as a false and political eloquence had on the state and on public life. That principle of harmony which formed the leading tenet of the primitive philosophy of Greece before the introduction of sophistry, was not an ignoble—it was even a beautiful, idea, although it might be far from solving the high problems and questions of philosophy, or satisfying the deeper inquiries of the human mind.

It was from these public games, popular festivals, and great poetical exhibitions, which had such a mighty and important influence on the whole public life of the Greeks, and which served to knit so strongly the bonds of the Hellenic confederacy, that, by means of the odes, specifically designed for such occasions, the theatre, and the whole dramatic art of the Greeks, derived their origin. This poetry, which is less gene-



rally intelligible to other nations and times than the Homeric poems, because it enters more deeply into the individual life of the Greeks, does not display less invention, sublimity, and depth of art, from that ideal beauty which pervades its whole character, and from its lofty tone of feeling. Even the Doric odes of Pindar, amid their milder beauties, rise often to the tragic grandeur of the succeeding poets, or to the comprehensive and epic fulness of the old Mæonian bard.

No nation has as yet been able to equal the charm and amenity of Homer, the elevation of Æschylus, and the noble beauty of Sophocles ; and perhaps it is wrong even to aspire to their excellence, for true beauty and true sublimity can never be acquired in the path of imitation. Euripides, who lived in the times when rhetoric was predominant, is ranked with the great poets we have named by such critics only, as are unable to comprehend and appreciate the whole elevation of Grecian intellect, and to discern its peculiar and characteristic depth. It is worthy of remark, as it serves to show the general propensity of Grecian intellect for the boldest contrasts, that these loftiest productions of tragedy, and which have retained that character of unrivalled excellence through all succeeding ages, were accompanied by the old popular comedy which, while its inventive fancy dealt in the boldest fictions of mythology, and in the humorous exhibitions of the gods, made it its peculiar business to fasten on all the follies of ordinary life and to exhibit them to public ridicule without the least reserve.

That the sensual worship of nature, the basis of all heathenism, and more particularly so of the Greek idolatry, must have had a very prejudicial influence on Greek morals ; that the want of a solid system of ethics, founded on God and divine truth, must have given rise to great corruption even in a more simple period of society ; and that this already prevalent corruption must have increased to a frightful extent in the general degradation of the state—is a matter evident of itself ; and it would be no difficult task to draw from the pages of the popular comedy we have just spoken of, and from other sources, a terrific picture of the moral habits of the Greeks. Yet I know not whether such a description would be necessary, or even advantageous, for the purpose of this philosophy of history—the more so, as it would not be difficult to draw from similar sources of immorality, and from the now usual statistics of vice and

crime, a sketch of the moral condition of one or more Christian nations, that would by no means accord with the pre-conceived notion of the great moral superiority of modern times. We may thus the more willingly rest contented with a general acknowledgement of the great moral depravity of mankind; which exists wherever mighty powers and strong motives of a superior order do not counteract it, and which must have broken out more conspicuously there, where, as among the Greeks, the prevailing religion was a paganism that promoted and sanctioned sensuality. In regard to the poetry and plastic arts of the Greeks, it must even strike us as a matter of astonishment that it is in comparatively but few passages, and few works, this pagan sensuality appears in a manner hurtful to dignity of style and harmony of expression. It would not at least have surprised us had this defect been oftener apparent, when we consider the doctrines and views of life generally prevalent in antiquity; for it was, in most cases, less the sterner dictates of morality that prevented the recurrence of this defect than an exquisite sense of propriety, which even in art is the outward drapery that girds and sets off beauty. Besides a mere conventional concealment cannot be imposed as a law on the art of sculpture; our moral feelings are much less offended by the representation of nudity in the pure noble style of the best antiques, than by the disguised sensuality which marks many spurious productions of modern art. In poetry and in art, at least in the elder and flourishing period, the Greeks have, for the most part, attained to internal harmony—in philosophy they were much less fortunate—and least of all in public life, which was almost always distracted, and at last utterly jarring, dissonant, and ruinous.

I called the science of the Greeks a *natural* science, and in this quality, which it possessed in so eminent a degree, it affords us the highest instruction, and is of itself extremely interesting; for in its origin, this science proceeded chiefly, almost exclusively, from nature—pursued a sequestered and solitary path—a stranger to poetry and mythology which was there predominant, far removed from public and political life—and often even in an attitude of hostility towards the state. The physical sciences, and particularly natural history, were created by the Greeks—so was the science of medicine, in which Hippocrates is still honoured as the greatest master; and geometry and the ancient

system of astronomy were handed down to posterity, considerably enlarged and improved by the labours of the Greeks. In the second place, Grecian science may be denominated a *natural* science, because, as it directed its attention successively to the various objects of the world, of life, and to man himself, it ever took a thoroughly natural view of all things, and even in self-knowledge, in practical life, and in history, sought to seize and comprehend the nature of man, and to unfold the character of his being, with the utmost precision of language, and according to conceptions derived exclusively from life. Thus when Plato and his followers direct their philosophical inquiries to objects lying beyond, and far exalted above, the sphere of nature and real life, we must regard these inquiries as exceptions from the ordinary practice of Grecian intellect, and from the ruling spirit of its speculations; in the same way as the expeditions of Alexander the Great form an exception from the usual routine of Grecian politics. Lastly, Grecian science may be denominated a *natural* science, because philosophy, founded on the old basis of poetry and classical culture, allied to history, and the language and symbols of tradition, assumed in general a form clear, beautiful, animated, and eminently conformable to nature and the mind of man; and however much this philosophy may at times have been lost and bewildered in the void of a false dialectic, it still never perished in the petrifying chill of abstract speculations. And even Plato, though his philosophy so far transcended the ordinary sphere of Grecian intellect, had been well nurtured in Hellenic eloquence, art, and culture—and, in all these, was himself the greatest master.

With this profound and lofty feeling for nature, did the early philosophers of Greece, who were chiefly Ionians, like Thales, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus, consider respectively water, air, and fire, as the primary powers of nature and of all things; and it was only Anaxagoras, the master of Socrates, who first clearly expounded the nature of that supreme and divine intelligence which created nature and regulates the world. Prior to this philosopher, Heraclitus had asserted this doctrine, perhaps with greater purity—certainly with more depth and penetration; but in his obscure writings it is less intelligibly expressed. With his supreme intelligence in nature, Anaxagoras conjoined the *ομοιομερεα*, that is to say, not the real atoms of a lifeless matter, but rather the animated substance of material



life. Thus his doctrine was a simple system of dualism, quite in harmony, it would seem, with the feelings of those early ages, as we have noticed a similar system in the history of Indian philosophy. These old Ionian philosophers in general regarded only the internal life in nature and all existence—the constant change and endless vicissitude in the world and in all things; and hence many of them began to doubt, and at last finally denied, the existence of any thing steadfast and enduring. According to that law and march of contrast, which Grecian intellect, whether consciously or unconsciously, invariably pursued, these Ionian philosophers were now opposed by the school of Parmenides, which inculcated the doctrine of an all-pervading unity—and taught that this principle was the first and last, the sole, true, permanent, and eternal Being. Although this system was at first propounded in verse, it was by no means, in its essential and ruling spirit, a poetical pantheism, like that of the Indians—but more congenial with the intellectual habits of the Greeks, it was a pantheism thoroughly dialectic, which at first regarded all change as an illusion and idle phenomenon, and at last positively denied the possibility of change. Between these two extreme schools appeared the great disciple of Socrates, who sought, by a path of inquiry completely new, completely foreign to the Greeks—by a range of speculation which soared far above the world of sense, and outward experience, as well as above mere logic, to return to the supreme Godhead, infinitely exalted above all nature—deriving the notion of the Deity from immediate intuition, primeval revelation, or profound internal reminiscence. By this doctrine of reminiscence, which is the fundamental tenet of the Platonic system, this philosophy has a strong coincidence or affinity with the Indian doctrine of the metempsychosis, by the supposition it involves of the prior existence of the human soul. To such a notion of the pre-existence of the soul, in the literal sense of the term, no system of Christian philosophy could easily subscribe. But if, as there is no reason to prevent us, we should understand this Platonic notion of reminiscence in a more spiritual sense—as the awakening or resuscitation of the consciousness of the divine image implanted in our souls—as the soul's perception of that image; this theory would then perfectly coincide with the Christian doctrine of the divine image originally stamped on the human soul, and of the internal illu-

mination of the soul by the renovation of that image; and hence we ought in no way to be astonished that this Platonic mode of thinking—for such it is rather than any exclusive system, as it is the first great philosophy of revelation clothed and propounded in an European form—should have ever appeared so captivating to the profound thinkers of Christianity. In Plato's time, that host of sophists who had sprung out of the dialectic contests of the earlier philosophy, out of its rejection and disbelief of every thing permanent, immutable, and eternal in nature, in life, and in knowledge, as well as out of the democratic spirit of the age, and the ever-prevailing immorality—in Plato's time, that host of sophists completely bewildered and confused the public mind, poisoned all principle and morality in their very source, and accomplished the ruin of society in Greece in general, and in Athens in particular. And the masterly portrait which Plato has given us of these sophists exhibits well this race, and the pernicious influence they exerted over Grecian intellect, and the whole circle of Grecian states; and this political influence of the sophists forms the third epoch in the history of Greece, which, by means of these popular sycophants, became daily more and more democratic, till at last it perished in anarchy.

The more ancient philosophers of Greece lived almost all in a state of retirement from public life, taking no part in political affairs, or evincing very evident sentiments of hostility to the governments and republics of their native country. They were almost all unfriendly to the prevailing principles of democracy; and the ideal governments, which they, as well as Plato, have sketched, were all in the spirit of a very rigid aristocracy of virtue and law—evincing a very marked predilection for that form of government as it existed, though in a state of great degeneracy, among the Doric Greeks. Long before Plato, the Pythagoreans had inculcated doctrines perfectly similar, or at least of a very kindred nature; and with the view and purpose of introducing their principles into public life, by which undoubtedly the governments and the whole frame of society in Greece, as well as the whole system of Grecian thought, would have assumed a totally new and different shape. But before the Pythagorean confederacy, which was so widely diffused through the Greek states of Southern Italy, was able to accomplish its design, the violent re-action of an opposite party of

thinkers destroyed it, or at least deprived it of all ascendancy and political influence.

The age of Aristotle concurred with that of the Macedonian sway to terminate anarchy of every kind. To the old evil of a false dialectic, which had become an inveterate habit, and, as it were, a second nature to Grecian intellect, he endeavoured to oppose his ample and substantial logic; and this must be regarded not so much as a wonderful *organum*, a living and never-failing source of scientific truth, but rather as a remedy for that disease of a false, sophistical rhetoric, so prevalent in his own age, and the one immediately preceding—and which had brought about the ruin of all truths, and an universal anarchy of doctrines, even in practical life. With a perspicacious, penetrative, and comprehensive intellect, he has reduced all the philosophic, and all the historical science of preceding ages and of his own time, to a clear, well-ordered system, for the ample instruction of posterity:—in both these sciences, as well as in natural history, he has remained, down to the latest time, the master-guide. In those parts of his philosophy which lie between this natural science and the old dialectic contests, in its primary and fundamental principles, the system of Aristotle, when rightly understood, contains much that leads to the most dangerous errors, especially in his notion of God: though we cannot with justice impute to him the abuse which has been made of his philosophy in subsequent ages. Notwithstanding the many excellent things which are to be found in the *Ethics* of Aristotle, considered merely as an effort of unassisted reason; yet in all the inquiries after a higher truth—after the first notion of the divine which, in the elder philosophy of nature, was so imperfectly understood, and which in the consummate rationalism of Aristotle was completely misapprehended—in all these important inquiries, the Stagyrite is far from being such a guide as Plato; and his philosophy is not like the Platonic, a scientific introduction to the Christian revelation, and to the knowledge of divine truths. The later systems of philosophy among the Greeks were, with some slight variations of form, mere repetitions, often only mere combinations and compilations, of the ancient philosophy; or they exhibited a thorough degeneracy of science and intellect, as in the atomical system of Epicurus, which even on life and morals had an atomical influence.



The Greek states have long since disappeared from the face of the earth—the republics, as well as the Macedonian kingdoms founded by Alexander, have long since ceased to exist. Many centuries—near two thousand years, have elapsed, since a vestige remained of that ancient greatness and transitory power. If the celebrated battles and other mighty events of those ages are still known to us ; if they still excite in us a lively interest, it is principally because they have been delineated with such incomparable beauty, such instructive interest, by the great classical writers. It is not the republican governments of Greece, nor the brief and fleeting period of Grecian liberty, which was so soon succeeded by civil war and anarchy—it is not the universal empire of Macedon, which was but of short duration, and was soon swallowed up in the Roman or Parthian domination—it is not these that mark out the place which Greece occupies in the great whole of universal history, nor the mighty and important part she has had in the civilisation of mankind. The share allotted to her was the light of science in its most ample extent, and in all the clear brilliance of exposition which it could derive from art. It is in this intellectual sphere only that the Greeks have been gifted with extraordinary power, and have exerted a mighty influence on after-ages. Plato and Aristotle, far more than Leonidas and Alexander the Great, contain nearly the sum and essence of all truly permanent and influential which the Greeks have bequeathed to posterity. It is evident that I include under these great names the whole classical culture which formed the basis of this Greek science—the general refinement of minds—the fine arts, and above all, the glorious old poetry of Greece. We have to mention another department of Greek science, wherein from its natural clearness and liveliness, its profound observation of man, the most eminent success was attained. And the pre-eminence consists in this—that historical art, as well as historical research, was originated by the Greeks, and that both have attained a degree of perfection which has been almost ever unknown to the Asiatic nations, and which even the moderns have only imitated by degrees upon the great models of antiquity. The father of history, Herodotus, has not been without reason compared to Homer, on account of his manifold charms, and the clearness and fulness of his narrative. We remain in utter astonishment when we reflect on the depth and extent of

his knowledge, researches, inquiries, and remarks on the history and antiquities of the various nations of the earth, and of mankind in general. The deeper and more comprehensive the researches of the moderns have been on ancient history, the more have their regard and esteem for Herodotus increased. the latter classical historians display much rhetoric ; but this was natural, when we consider what a mighty influence rhetoric exerted on public life, and that it had become an all-ruling power in the state. This false rhetoric, that idle pomp of words, the death of all genuine poetry and higher art, as the endless strifes of a false dialectic are the ruin of all sane and legitimate science, of all precision of intellect, and soundness of judgment—this false rhetoric, by the exclusively sophistical turn which it gave to the public mind and public opinion, accelerated the downfall of government, and of all public virtues in Greece.

The third category or sphere of Grecian intellect and Grecian life which I designated after that of divine art, and natural science, and the varied knowledge of man, was *political rationalism*.\* I have used that expression, chiefly in reference to the later ages of the Greek republics, as it is the quality which eminently distinguished them from the Asiatic states, and those of modern Europe.

In the later ages of Athens, and of the other democratic states, the rationalist principles of freedom and equality were the sole prevailing and recognised maxims of government. Considered in this historical point of view, the chief difference between the two principal forms of government consists in this—that the republic is, or at least tends to be, the government of reason ; while monarchy is founded on the higher principles of faith and love. But the distinction lies rather in the ruling spirit, the moral principle which animates these two governments, than in their mere outward form. Republics which are founded on ancient laws and customs, on hereditary rites, and usages, on faith in the sanctity of hereditary right, on attachment to ancestral manners (as was undoubtedly the case with the Greek republics in the early ages of their history), such states, so far from being opposed to the true spirit of monarchy,

\* In the German, *Vernunft-staat*, the government of reason.

are, to all essential purposes, of a kindred nature with it. Such, too, are those happy republics which, content with the narrow limits of their power and existence, at peace with other states, devoid of ambition, firmly wedded to their ancient rites and customs, figure but little on the arena of history, and occupy but small space in the columns of the gazetteer. In a monarchy, attachment to the hereditary sovereign and to the royal dynasty is the corner-stone and the firmest pillar of the state—whole provinces may be conquered, and important battles may be lost; but while this foundation of love remains unshaken—while this principle is in active operation, the edifice of the state will stand unmoved.

The next foundation of monarchy is faith in ancient rights—in the heritage of ancestral customs and privileges, according to the several relations of the different classes of the state; and we should beware, in a monarchical government, not to touch or violate with an incautious hand, or change without necessity, hereditary rights and usages which time has consecrated, for such heedless changes shake the very foundations of the social edifice. When a monarchy is founded on a written contract (whether it be intended as a sort of treaty of peace, with some party aspiring to dominion in the state, or be only the successful experiment of some scientific theory of political rationalism), such a government, though it may preserve the outward form, has ceased, in all essential points, to be a monarchy according to the old acceptation of the term. An absolute government, whatever shape it may assume, whether it take the form of republicanism, and adopt the rationalist principles of freedom and equality—principles which in the nature of things, and according to the very constitution of human reason, are almost ever inseparable from a spirit of progressive encroachment in foreign policy (as is sufficiently proved by the inordinate ambition, the insatiable thirst of power which distinguished the great republics of antiquity, in proportion as they became more democratic, and more a prey to anarchy), or whether the absolute government assume the lawless and illegitimate sway of a military despotism—such a government may indeed be established in a sort of equipoise, circumscribed within tolerably reasonable limits, and preserved at least in its physical existence by means of such a written compact as we have spoken of above.



But the old Christian state—the state which is founded in faith and love—can be renovated and re-established, not by the mere dead letter of any theory, though it should contain nothing but the pure dogmatic truth—but by faith—by love—by the religious energy of all the great fundamental principles of moral life.

END OF LECTURE VIII.

## LECTURE IX.

Character of the Romans—Sketch of their Conquests—On strict Law, and the Law of Equity in its application to History, and according to the Idea of Divine Justice—Commencement of the Christian Dispensation.

INSTEAD of that astonishing variety in the states, the races, the political constitutions, the manners, styles of art, and modes of intellectual cultivation, which divided from its very origin the social existence of Greece—a division which gave a more rich and diversified aspect to Greek civilisation—the ancient history of Italy shows us, on the contrary, how every thing merged more and more in the one, eternal, imperishable, ever-prosperous, ever-progressive, and at last all-devouring, city—Rome. The first ages, indeed, of Italy—the primitive nations that settled in that country—such as the Pelasgi, whose early historical existence is attested by those Cyclopean, or more properly, Pelasgic walls and constructions still extant there—the Etruscans (according to some authors, descended from the more northern race of Rhoetians), from whom the Romans borrowed so many of their idolatrous rites and customs—the Sabines and Samnites, the Latins and the Trojans—lastly, the Celts in northern, and the Greeks in southern, Italy—all in their several relations to one another, and in the various commixture of their origin and progress, open a wide field of intricate investigation and perplexing research to the historical inquirer. But from the general point of view taken in universal history, all this antiquarian learning soon falls into the background, in the presence of that great central city which quickly absorbs into itself all the ancient states of Italy, and Italy itself, and which, though originally composed of many heterogeneous elements—Latin, Sabine, and Etruscan—still was very early moulded into an unity of character—and whose ulterior growth and progress, slow indeed at first, but soon as fearfully rapid as

it was immeasurably great, principally attracts the notice of the historical observer. In the later, and still more in the early, ages of Rome, the national idolatry was less poetically wrought and adorned than that of the Greeks—it was altogether much simpler, ruder, and more serious than the latter. Even the word *religio*, to take it in its first signification as a second tie, corresponds to a far more definite and serious object than can be found in the gay mythology of the popular religion of the Greeks. Idolatrous rites were closely interwoven into the whole life of the ancient Romans. As the twins of Mars, Romulus and Remus, who were suckled by the she-wolf, were called the founders of the city; so Mars himself was honoured by the Romans as their real progenitor, and principal national divinity—particularly under the name of *Gradivus*, that is to say, the swift for battle, or the strider of the earth. The sacred shields of brass which, on certain appointed festivals, were borne in the military dances, the *Palladium*, the sceptre of the venerable *Priam*, formed, together with similar relics of antiquity, the seven holy pledges of the eternal duration and ever-flourishing increase of the seven-hilled city, which was honoured under three different names; one whereof was ever kept secret, while the other two referred to its blooming strength and ever-enduring power. The ancient cities of the Greeks, those of the Italian nations, whether akin to them, or otherwise, possessed, indeed, their tutelary deities, their particular sanctuaries, their highly revered *Palladium*, some ancient oracles, and certain religious rites and festivals consecrated to their honour. But it would not be easy to find another example where the traditional reverence, we might almost say, the old hereditary deification of the city, had, from the earliest period, taken such deep root in the minds of men; and where such a formal worship was so intimately interwoven with manners, customs, and even maxims of state, as among the Romans. And when an universal monarchy had sprung out from this single city, it was still that city—it was still eternal Rome that was ever regarded, not merely as the centre, but as the essence of the whole—the personified conception of the state—the grand idea of the empire. The early traditions of the Romans which, though from the commencement of the city they assume the garb of authentic history (as in the pages of *Livy* for instance), yet are for a long time to be regarded mostly as mere traditions,—



evinced a fact well entitled to our consideration,—as it serves to show how that strong, inflexible, but harsh, Roman character, such as the later records of history display, manifested itself even in the earliest infancy of this people ;— it is this, that among no other nation, did historical recollections even of the remotest antiquity exert such a powerful influence on life, or strike so deep a root in the minds of men. Nearly five hundred years had elapsed since the time of the elder Brutus, when, in the Roman world now so mightily changed, a citizen appealed to the second Brutus in these words—“ Brutus, thou sleepest”—as if to urge him to that deed which the first had perpetrated on the proud Tarquin, and by which that celebrated name had become identified with the idea of a bold deliverer. An ardent hatred towards all kings, and towards royalty itself, which from that period remained ever deeply fixed in the Roman mind, characterised this people even in the most ancient period of their history. Not only in the remarks and reflections of the later Roman historians on the first ages of Rome, but in facts themselves, as in the case of Spurius Cassius, we may trace the natural concomitant of this hatred—a passionate jealousy of all powerful party-chiefs, and democratic leaders, who were perhaps suspected, or probably convicted, of aspiring to supreme power in the state, and aiming at the establishment of tyranny—as if the Romans even then had a clear presentiment of the inevitable fate that awaited an empire like theirs, and of the quarter whence their ruin would proceed. Even in the first ages, the Patricians and Plebeians appear on the historical arena, not only as separate classes, such as existed in almost all ancient states, and between whom no matrimonial ties could be formed originally at Rome ; but as political parties, in a state of mutual hostility, each of which strove to obtain the ascendancy in the forum and in the state.

The old Romans of these early times were strangers to those various systems of legislation, those rhetorical treatises of jurisprudence, conceived mostly on democratic principles, or to those opposite political theories composed in an aristocratic spirit, which the Greeks then possessed in such abundance. On the contrary, the Romans manifested even then, in the primitive period of their existence, a deep, perspicacious, practical sense, and a mighty political instinct, which showed itself in their first institutions of state. Even in the first idea of the Tribune—

as a regular mode of popular representation, an element of opposition introduced into the very constitution of the state—there was contained the germ of that mighty political power and action, which afterwards a man of energetic character, like Tiberius Gracchus, knew how to exert. This power, had it been kept within due limits, might have proved most beneficial to the community; and a single man, endowed with such a character, and animated by the same spirit of a true patriotic opposition, has often accomplished more at Rome, than whole parliaments in modern free states. The authority of the Censor, negative and restrictive in itself, but still not merely judicial—and which over the conduct of persons was very extensive—the exceptional institution of the Dictatorship, in the early ages of Rome by no means so dangerous—were so many just, and practical political discoveries of the Romans, which evince their statesman-like genius, and which even in later times, among other nations, and under various forms, have served as real and effectual elements in the constitution of states.

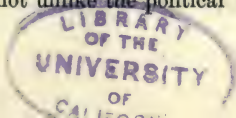
The interest of those two parties—the Plebeians and the Patricians—concurred fully but in one point—the desire which both had of constantly invading the neighbouring nations, and obtaining landed possessions for themselves in the conquests they made for the state. The Plebeians ever and again cherished the hope of being able to obtain for their profit, and that of the poorer citizens, a sort of distribution of the state-lands won in war. But as the Patricians were mostly invested with all the high offices and dignities in war as well as peace, they knew how to turn all the opportunities of conquest to their best advantage, however much they might on particular occasions postpone their private interests as individuals to the general interests of the state. Although, so long as their ancient principles remained unchanged, the Romans were distinguished for the utmost disinterestedness in regard to their country, and for great simplicity of manners, and even frugality in private life, they were in all their foreign enterprises, even in the earliest times, exceedingly covetous of gain, or rather of land; for it was in land, and the produce of the soil, that their principal, and almost only wealth consisted. The old Romans were a thoroughly agricultural people; and it was only at a later period that commerce, trades and arts were introduced among them, and even then they occupied but a subordinate place.

Agriculture was even highly honoured by the Romans; and while almost all the celebrated, and, in general, most of the proper, names among the Greeks were derived from gods and heroes, and had a poetical lustre, and glorious significancy, it is a circumstance characteristic of the Romans, that the names of many of their most distinguished families, such as Fabius, Lentulus, Piso, Cicero, and many others, were taken from agriculture and from vegetables; while others again, as Secundus, Quintus, Septimus, and Octavius, are tolerably prosaic, and are derived from the numbers of the old popular reckoning. The science of agriculture forms one of the few subjects on which the Romans produced writers truly original. That of jurisprudence, in which they were most at home, which they cultivated with peculiar care, and which they very considerably enlarged, had its foundation in the written laws of the primitive period of their history; and in their elder jurisprudence, the Agrarian system very evidently prevails. As a robust, agricultural people, they were eminently fitted for military service; and in practised vigour, and constancy under every privation, the Roman infantry, with the vigorous masses of its legion, surpassed all military bodies that have ever been organised.

The Roman state from its origin, and according to its first constitution, was nothing else than a well-organised school of war, a permanent establishment for conquest. Among other nations, as among the Persians and Greeks, the desire of military glory and the lust of conquest was only a temporary enthusiasm, called forth by some special cause, or some mighty motive—a sudden sally—the thought of a moment. Among the Romans it is precisely the systematically slow and progressive march of their first conquests, their inflexible perseverance, their unremitting activity, the vigilant use of every advantageous opportunity, which strike the observer, and explain the cause of their mighty success in after-times. That unshaken constancy under misfortune, which ever characterised the Romans, they displayed even at this early period, during the conquest of their city by the Gauls; though this misfortune, like that people itself, was but a transient calamity. In general, the Romans never evinced greater energy than when they were overcome, or when they met with an unexpected resistance. Sometimes, in a moment of extreme urgency, their generals,



like the Consul Decius Mus, taking a chosen body of troops, invoked the national gods, devoted themselves to death, and rushed on the superior forces of the enemy, whereby, though they fell the victims of their zeal, they saved the army from the menaced ignominy of defeat, and achieved a signal victory. With such a character, such unshaken fortitude and perseverance under misfortune, we can well conceive that in a state so constituted like theirs, the Romans, by their indefatigable activity in war, should in no very great space of time have conquered and subdued all the surrounding nations and states of Italy. It was thus they successively overcame the kindred and confederated tribes of Latium, and the rude Sabines; that, after a long and obstinate siege of the Tuscan city of Veii, they became masters of the Etrurian league, lords of the beautiful Campania, and vanquished the warlike Samnites on the Apennine range, and on the coast of the Adriatic. They now cast their eyes on the rich provinces of Magna Græcia. In the war against Tarentum, which was in alliance with Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, they came for the first time in contact with the great extra-Italic Greek powers, and had to encounter, in the ranks of the enemy, the unwonted spectacle of war-elephants, which were there employed according to the Asiatic custom. After the loss of the first battles, they were victorious; and they now added Apulia and Calabria to their conquests. Each step in the career of victory drew after it new embarrassments, new occasions, and new matter for future wars. The inhabitants of Syracuse, who had been for some time governed by tyrants, formed, on the retreat of Pyrrhus, an alliance with the Carthaginians, then masters of half of Sicily, and sought their protection against the Romans, who were confederated with their enemies, another party in the island. This brought on the first Punic war with that republic, then mistress of the sea. In this warfare against Pyrrhus and the Carthaginians, the Romans, who had been hitherto confined within the secluded circle of the petty states of Italy, appeared for the first time on the great historical theatre of the then political world. In that age which was immediately subsequent to the time of Alexander the Great, the different Macedonian and other Greek powers of importance formed, together with Egypt and Carthage, a variously connected system of states, in one respect not unlike the political system of mo-



dern Europe, at the end of the seventeenth and during the greater part of the eighteenth century. For, according to a principle of the balance of power, each state sought to strengthen itself by alliances, and to repress an overwhelming ascendancy, without on that account at all relaxing its efforts for its own aggrandisement. That on one hand, the fluctuating condition and internal troubles of those countries, and on the other, the fresh youthful vigour, the steady perseverance and constancy of the Roman people, would soon put an end to this system of equilibrium, to these political oscillations between the different states, and bring about the complete triumph and decided ascendancy of the Romans, might, indeed, have been easily foreseen, and was in the very nature of things. After the first Punic war, the Romans to the conquest of Sicily added that of Corsica and Sardinia; and they next subdued the Cisalpine Gauls in the North of Italy. When even Hannibal, the most formidable enemy the Roman republic ever had to encounter, and the one who had the most deeply studied its true character, and the danger threatening the world from that quarter; when even he, after the many great victories which, in a long series of years, he had obtained over the Romans, in the second Punic war; though he shook the power, was unable to break the spirit of this people;—when this was the case, one might regard the great political question of the then civilised world as settled; and it could no longer be a matter of doubt that that city, justly denominated Strength, and which, even from of old had been the idol of her sons (who accounted every thing as nought in comparison with her interests); that that city, I say, was destined to conquer the world, and establish an empire, the like whereof had never yet been founded by preceding conquerors. The second Punic war terminated under the elder Scipio before the walls of Carthage, and it completed the destruction of that rival of Rome, at least as a political power. The princes and states that, while it was yet time, should have formed a firm and steadfast league against the common foe, fell now separately under the sword of the victors, and the yoke of conquest. In the further progress of their triumphs, the conquerors knew to assume a certain character of generosity, and give a certain colour of magnanimity to their acts, in the eyes of a gazing and terrified world. Thus, for instance, after the defeat of Philip, King of Macedon, they declared to deluded

Greece that she was free; and again, Antiochus the Great, whose arrogance had given offence to many, and whose overthrow was, in consequence, the subject of very general joy, was compelled to cede the Lesser Asia as far as Mount Taurus; and the victors gave away the conquered provinces and kingdoms to the princes in their alliance, and affected not to have the intention of subduing and keeping all for themselves. For it was yet much too soon to let the unconquered states and nations perceive that all, without distinction, were destined, one after the other, to become the provinces of the all-absorbing empire of Rome. Thus now overpassing the limits of Greece, the Romans had obtained a firm footing in Asia; and this first step was soon enough to be succeeded by other and still further advances. Historians have often remarked the decisive moment when Cæsar, after an instant's reflection and delay, crossed the Rubicon; but we may ask now, when Rome herself had passed her Rubicon, where was that historical limit—that last boundary-line of ambition, after passing which no return, no halt was possible; if now, when all right, all justice, every human term and limit to ambition were lost sight of, if now idolised Rome, in the fulness of her pagan pride, and in her rapid career of destruction, marching from one crime against the world to another, and descending deeper and deeper into the abyss of interminable foreign and domestic bloodshed, was, from the summit of her triumphs, to sink beyond redemption, down to Caligula and Nero? We might point out, as an instance of this ever-growing and reckless arrogance, the moment when the last King of Macedon,\* not more than a century and a half from the death of Alexander the Great, was led in triumph into the city of the conquerors, a captive and in chains, to sate the eyes of the Roman populace. It entered into the high designs of Providence in the government of the world, during this middle and second period of universal history, that each of the conquering nations should receive its full measure of justice from another worse than itself, emerging suddenly from obscurity, and chosen as the instrument of its annihilation or subjection. But a still more decisive example of the spirit of Roman conquests was the cruel destruction of Carthage in the third Punic war, begun without

\* Perseus.



any assignable motive, and from pure caprice. In this case no other resistance could be expected than the resistance of despair, which here, indeed, showed itself in all its energy. For seventeen days the city was in flames, and the numbers that were exterminated amounted to 700,000 souls, including the women and children sold into slavery; so that this scene of horror served as an early prelude to the later destruction of Jerusalem. The wiser and more lenient Scipios had been against this war of extermination, and had had to contend with the self-willed rancour of the elder Cato; yet a Scipio conducted this war, and was the last conqueror over the ashes of Carthage. And this was a man universally accounted to be of a mild character and generous nature; and such he really was in other respects, and in private life. But this reputation must be apparently estimated by the Roman standard; for, whenever Roman interests were at stake, all mankind, and the lives of nations, were considered as of no importance. Besides, it is really not in the power of a general to do away with the cruelty of any received system of warfare.

The example of the first great re-action of nations, too late aroused, was set by Greece in the war of the Achaian league, It terminated like all the preceding wars;—Corinth was consumed, and its destruction involved that of an infinite number of noble and beautiful works of art, belonging to the better ages of Greece. Among the nations of the north and west that lived under a yet free and natural form of government, the Spanish distinguished themselves by a peculiar obstinacy of resistance. Scipio was unable to conquer Numantia; the people who defended their liberty behind this rampart, set fire to the city, and the remaining defenders devoted themselves to a voluntary death. In the public triumph which the Romans celebrated on this occasion, they were able to exhibit only a few brave Lusitanians of a gigantic size. Now commenced the civil wars :—the first was occasioned by Tiberius Gracchus, then leader of the popular party at Rome. To undertake the complete justification of any one of the leading men in the Roman parties, would be an arduous, not to say impracticable task ; yet we may positively assert of the elder Gracchus, that he was the best man of his party ; as the same observation will apply to the Scipios in the opposite party of the Patricians. The proposal of Gracchus was this—that the rights of Roman

citizens should be extended to the rest of Italy. It was in the very nature of things that such a change, or at least one very similar, should now take place, as in fact it did somewhat later; for after the conquest of so many provinces, the disproportion between the one all-ruling city, and the vast regions which it had subdued, was much too great to continue long. The armed insurrection of all the Italian nations that occurred soon after, sufficiently proves of what vital importance this measure was considered. But the pride of the ruling Patricians was extremely offended at this claim—they regarded it as an attempt to subvert the ancient constitution of the country—and, in the revolt that ensued, Tiberius Gracchus lost his life. From that time forward the principles apparently contended for on both sides were mere prettexts—whether it were the maintenance of the law, and of the ancient constitution, as asserted by the Patricians—or the just claims of the people, and the necessary changes which the altered circumstances of the times demanded, as alleged by the opposite party. It was now an open struggle for ascendancy between a few factious leaders and their partisans—a civil war carried on between fierce and formidable Oligarchs.

The effusion of blood was still greater in the troubles which the younger Caius Gracchus occasioned, and which had the same motive and the same object as the preceding commotions, though conducted with more animosity, and stained by greater crimes; and in the Patrician party, the noble Scipio, the hero of the third Punic war, fell a victim of assassination. Murders and poisoning were now every day more common; and it became the practice to carry daggers under the mantle. On this occasion we may cite an observation, made not by any father of the church, or any Christian moralist; but by a celebrated German historian, who was in other respects an enthusiastic admirer of the republican heroism of the ancients: “Rome, the mistress of the world,” says he, “drunk with the blood of nations, began now to rage in her entrails.” Of Marius and Sylla, on whom next devolved the conduct of the Patrician and Plebeian parties in the civil war, now conducted on a more extended scale, it is difficult to decide which of the two surpassed the other in cruelty and blood-thirstiness. Marius was indeed of a ruder and more savage character—but Sylla evinced perhaps a more systematic and relentless ferocity.

Both were great generals; and it was only after obtaining splendid victories over foreign nations that they could think of turning their fury against their native city, after having spent their rage on the rest of mankind. The victories of Marius had delivered Rome from the mighty danger with which she had been menaced, by the irruption of the powerful tribes of the Cimbri and Teutones—the first forerunner of the great northern emigration. Danger served but to arouse the Roman people to more triumphant exertions; and every effort of hostile resistance, when once overcome, tended only to confirm their universal dominion. The greatest and most formidable of these efforts of resistance was made by Mithridates, King of Pontus—it began by the murder of eighty thousand Romans in his dominions, and the simultaneous revolt of all the Italian nations against the Roman sway. No enemy of the Romans, since Hannibal, had formed such a deep-laid plan as Mithridates, whose intention it was to unite in one armed confederacy against Rome all the nations of the north, from the regions of Mount Caucasus, as far as Gaul and the Alps. By his victories over this enemy, Sylla prepared to return to Rome, torn and convulsed by civil war; and on his entry into the city, he treated it with all the infuriated vengeance of a conqueror, proscribed, gave full loose to slaughter, and perpetrated the most execrable atrocities. We may cite as a strange instance of the still surviving greatness of the Roman character, the fact, that Sylla, immediately after all this immense bloodshed, as if every thing had passed in perfect conformity to law and order, laid down the dictatorship, retired peacefully to his estate, and there prepared to write his own history. In one respect, however, he was a flatterer of the multitude—he seems to have thoroughly understood the Roman people, for he was the first to introduce the games of the circus, those bloody combats of animals, those cruel gladiatorial fights, which afterwards, under the emperors, became, like bread, one of the most indispensable necessities to the Roman people, and one of the most important objects of concern to its rulers. For these games, where the Roman eye delighted to contemplate men devoted to certain death contend and wrestle with the most savage animals, Pompey on one occasion introduced six hundred lions on the arena, and Augustus, four hundred panthers. Thus did a thirst for blood, after having been long



the predominant passion of the party-leaders of this all-ruling people, become an actual craving—a festive entertainment for the multitude. And yet the Romans of this age, when we consider their conduct in war—in the battles and victories they won, or the strength of character they evinced, whether on the tented field, or on the arena of political contests, displayed an admirable, we might sometimes say a super-human, energy; so that we are often at a loss how to reconcile our admiration with the detestation which their actions unavoidably inspire. It was as if the iron-footed god of war, *Gradivus*, so highly revered from of old by the people of *Romulus*, actually bestrode the globe, and at every step struck out new torrents of blood; or as if the dark *Pluto* had emerged from the abyss of eternal night, escorted by all the vengeful spirits of the lower world, by all the *Furies* of passion and insatiable cupidity, by the blood-thirsty demons of murder, to establish his visible empire, and erect his throne for ever on the earth. There can be no doubt that if the Roman history were divested of its accustomed rhetoric, of all the patriotic maxims and trite sayings of politicians, and were presented with strict and minute accuracy in all its living reality, every humane mind would be deeply shocked at such a picture of tragic truth, and penetrated with the profoundest detestation and horror. The licentiousness of Roman manners, too, was really gigantic; so that the moral corruption of the Greeks appears in comparison a mere infant essay in the school of vice.

The civil wars that next followed had in all essential points the same character with the first, though the fearful recollection which still dwelt in men's minds, of the times of *Marius* and *Sylla*, tended to introduce at first a certain caution in all external proceedings; but in the course of their progress, these wars resumed the sanguinary character of the earlier civil contests. The proper circle of the Roman conquests, whose natural circumference was now marked out by all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, was in the second period of the civil wars pretty well filled up by *Cæsar* and *Pompey*—by *Pompey* on the side of *Asia*, and by *Cæsar* on the side of the incomparably more formidable and more warlike nations of the north-western frontier. The conquest of *Gaul* was achieved by an uncommon effusion of human blood, even according to a Roman estimation; and in the fifty battles related by *Cæsar* to have been fought in

the Gallic war, in the complete subjugation of Spain, in the first wars on the Germanic frontiers and in Britain, as well as in the north of Africa against Juba, and against the son of Mithridates, the number of men left on the field is computed at twelve hundred thousand ; and it is to be observed that as Cæsar is his own historian, these estimates have in part been given by himself. Yet he was praised for the goodness and mildness of his character ; but this praise must be measured by the Roman standard, and it is so far true that Cæsar was by no means vindictive, nor in general subject to passion, nor cruel without a motive. But, whenever his interest required it, he was careless what blood he spilled. The war between Cæsar and Pompey extended over all the provinces and regions of the Roman world ; but, when conqueror, Cæsar formed and followed up the plan of completing and consolidating his victory by a system of lenity and conciliation. With all his indefatigable activity and consummate wisdom, with all the equanimity, prudence, and energy of his character, he appears to have been still weak enough to imagine that the laurels he had acquired, in a way unequalled by any, were insufficient without the diadem—at least he gave occasion for such a suspicion. And so the second Brutus perpetrated on his person the act, for which the elder had been so highly commended by all Roman historians. To relate the subsequent civil war of Brutus and Cassius, the reconciliation between Antony and Octavius, which involved the death of Cicero, the new rupture and war between the latter rivals, would serve only to swell this account of Rome and her destinies. These contests terminated in the establishment of monarchy, when the bloody proscriptions and civil wars of preceding times were forgotten, and Octavius, under the name of Augustus, appeared as the restorer of general peace, and the first absolute monarch of the Roman world ;—a monarch whose long reign was on the whole very happy, when compared with previous times, and who during his life was half-deified by his subjects. Unlimited power was still clothed and half veiled in the old republican forms and expressions ; and the recollection of Cæsar's fate was too present to the mind of the cautious Augustus, for him ever to neglect those forms and usages. It would really appear as if the world were destined to breath for a time in peace, and to repose awhile from those earlier wars, before another and a higher peace descended, and became visible on the earth—and

along with that other, higher and divine peace, a new and spiritual combat, waged not with the warlike parties of old, nor even with external and earthly power, but with the secret and internal cause of all those agitations, and all that injustice in the world.

A golden age of literature and poetry served now to adorn the general peace, which the mighty Augustus had conferred on the conquered world. This poetry was, however, but a late harvest which flourished towards the autumn of declining paganism. Plautus and Terence we can regard merely as tolerably successful imitators of the Greeks. The beautiful diction and poetry of Virgil and Horace are in a general survey of literature chiefly valuable, inasmuch as they gave a noble refinement to a language which, in modern ages, and even still among ourselves, has been universally current; but all this poetry, including that, which the richer, more copious, and more inventive fancy of Ovid produced, can be considered by posterity as only a very thin gleanings after the full bloom and rich harvest of Grecian poetry and art. The real poetry of the Roman people lay elsewhere than in those artificial compositions of Greek scholars. It must be sought for in the festive games of the circus, which the prudent Augustus never neglected—in those theatrical combats, where the gladiator, wrestling with death, knew how to fall and die with dignity, when he wished to obtain the plaudits of the multitude—in that circus, in fine, which so often afterwards resounded with the cry of an infuriated populace: “*Christianos ad leones!*” “the Christians to the lions, the Christians to the lions!”

In the department of history, the case was very different from what it was in poetry. There the strong practical sense of the Romans, their profound political sagacity, the far wider circle of their political relations, gave them a decided advantage over the Greeks, who can show no historian possessed of the simple grandeur of Cæsar;—a style as rapid, and as straightforward, as the exploits of Cæsar himself; or distinguished, like Tacitus, by that deep insight into the abyss of human corruption; while to Livy must be assigned a place by the side at least of the most illustrious Greeks. Among the Romans, political eloquence and philosophy, by that union of the two, such as prevails in Cicero’s writings, as well as by the greater magnitude and practical importance of the subjects which both found for discussion,



possess a peculiar charm and value. At this period, the study of Greek philosophy was regarded and prosecuted by the Romans merely as an useful auxiliary to eloquence; and in the general depravity of morals, and amid the utter indifference for public misery and universal bloodshed, the philosophy of Epicurus naturally found the most admirers. It was only at a later period, when, under the better emperors, some men had undertaken the task of the moral regeneration of the Roman people and the Roman state, that those who entertained this great design sought for the last plank of national safety in the stoical philosophy, which harmonised so well with the austere gravity of the Roman character. Then this philosophy obtained numerous followers among the Romans, as in earlier times it had found favour with many of them, especially among the Jurists.

In the whole circle of human sciences, jurisprudence is that department of intellect, in which the Romans have thought with the most originality, and have exerted the greatest influence; and which, by means of their writers, has obtained at once a very great degree of refinement, and a very wide diffusion. Cæsar had formed the project of a general digest of Roman laws; but this great design, like so many others he had entertained, was left unexecuted; and the age of Augustus at least was distinguished by two great lawyers of opposite schools. It is by the scientific jurisprudence which they have bequeathed to posterity, more than by any thing else, that the Romans have exerted a mighty influence on after-ages. It must strike us at first sight as singular that a nation which, in its external relations, had risen to greatness, and indeed had founded its greatness, on so fearful an access of injustice, should have risen to such eminence in the science of jurisprudence, as the Romans undoubtedly have. But the injustice of their conduct towards other states and nations this people well knew how to conceal under legal forms, and establish on legal titles; and it often happened that, by the inconsistent conduct of other nations, they were able to give a colouring of equity to their acts, and show on their side the strict letter of law.

In the next place, the Roman jurisprudence regarded more immediately the relations of private life, and all the artificial forms of civil law; and we can well conceive that a people like the Romans, distinguished for so sound a judgment and such strong practical sense, and whose minds were so exclusively bent

on civil life, and its various relations, should have attained such distinction in the science of civil jurisprudence, notwithstanding the enormous iniquity of their conduct in the wider historical department of international law; and here we may find an explanation of that apparent contradiction between law and injustice, such as we find frequent examples of in human nature and in the records of history.

There is also another element of contradiction in the Roman law, considered both in itself, and in its relation to other codes—a contradiction which strongly pervaded the whole theory of that legislation, and may furnish us with a clue to a right judgment on the Roman jurisprudence, and on the influence it has exercised on posterity. This is the distinction between strict or absolute law, and the law of equity, that is to say, the law qualified by historical circumstances. In the Germanic law, as it is a law of custom and ancient usage, a law qualified by times and circumstances, the principle of equity is more predominant; and we have, indeed, reason to regret that this native and original legislation of the modern European nations should, by the prevailing influence of the more scientific jurisprudence of ancient Rome, have been cast into the background, in proportion as those nations began to mistake the true character of their historical antiquity. The Roman jurisprudence, as it deals in rigid formulas, and adheres to the strict letter, inclines more towards rigid and absolute law; and its spirit has something akin to the stern international policy of the ancient Romans. But is this strict and absolute law a fit criterion to apply to earthly concerns, can it be a true standard of human justice, in its more large and general applications to the great transactions of universal history, and in its relations to divine justice? Every thing absolute (and such undoubtedly is *strict law*, in the relations of private, and still more in those of public life),—every thing absolute is sure to provoke its contrary, and if continued, will occasion successive reactions, that can terminate only in the mutual destruction of conflicting parties—the inevitable result of all contests carried to extreme lengths—unless some higher principle of peace intervene to compose and determine them by a divine law of equity.

But if this conciliating principle do not pronounce its sentence, or if it be not attended to, extreme injustice only can spring from this rigid and inflexible application of extreme law;

and this is quite in the spirit of the old saying of the Jurists, which we must here apply in a more general sense, in order to estimate with truth and accuracy the nature of the contests which divide the world. "Let justice be done," they say (and the word is here used in the juridical sense of strict and absolute law),—"let justice be done, though the world should be ruined." And we may well say in reply:—Woe to mankind, woe to every individual, woe to the world, were they doomed to be finally judged according to this rigid justice, and this rigid justice only, by *Him* who alone has the power and the right to dispense such severe justice unto men, and judge them by its rules. But since such full and inexorable justice belongs to God only, who is incapable of error; and since all human justice is but the temporary delegate of the divine; it should necessarily be mild, indulgent, qualified by circumstances; and should on the principle of equity be as lenient as possible, and be ever mindful of its due limits. And this principle is applicable to the most important as well as the most insignificant relations of life, and is so thoroughly connected with them all that, according as we adopt the one or the other principle of strict and absolute law, or of mild equity, the whole of our conduct, opinions, and views of the world must differ. The power of the state is only a temporary and delegated power, destined to accomplish the ends of divine justice; and this dignity, indeed, is sufficiently exalted, and the responsibility attached to it sufficiently great; but this supreme human justice, unless it disregard its own limits, as well as those of mankind, is not divine justice, nor the immediate authority of God, nor God himself.

The old hereditary vice and fundamental error of the Roman government, and, indeed, of the Roman people, was that political idolatry of the state, to which the false theory of strict and absolute law was of itself calculated to lead. Although the absolute power of Augustus was still somewhat veiled under the old forms of the republic, yet even in his reign commenced the formal deification\* of the person of the prince, and, under the succeeding emperors, it exceeded all bounds, and descended to the basest forms of adulation. And even if this idolatry had been paid, not so exclusively to the person of an Augustus or a Tiberius, as to the idea of the state identified with that person; and if thus the real object of that pagan worship had been in



the latest, as in the earliest times, Rome, the eternally prosperous, the everlastingly powerful, the world-destroying, and people-devouring Rome, to which every thing must fall a sacrifice; still it was not the less a thorough political idolatry. And as a sensual worship of nature eminently characterised the poetical religion of the Greeks—as the abusive rites of magic were peculiar to the false mysteries of Egypt—so this third and greatest aberration of paganism—political idolatry in its most frightful shape, formed the distinguishing character and leading principle of the Roman state, from the earliest to the latest period of its history.

Under Augustus, the Roman empire was well-nigh rounded off in extent, since the geographical situation, as we before observed, of all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, might be considered a sufficiently wide natural frontier. The countries on the coast of Africa were protected by the contiguous deserts; on the northern side of the empire, which was more menaced by invasion, the strongly fortified borders of the Rhine and the Danube formed a secure barrier. Towards the eastern and Asiatic frontier, the Parthians were indeed a powerful and formidable enemy; but there was no probability they would ever seek, as the Persians had once done, to penetrate so far beyond their boundaries; while, on the other hand, the Romans had no real interest in extending their conquests further into that region, or into the interior parts of central Asia, as such a policy would only lead them further from the centre of their empire and their power, now unalterably fixed in Italy, and the old eternal city. The thoughts and feelings of all the better Romans were no longer turned on the aggrandisement of their empire, but solely and exclusively on a great internal regeneration of public morals, and, as far as was practicable, of the state itself, according to those ideal conceptions which they formed of old Rome in her better and more prosperous days. These projects of social regeneration were nearly in the same spirit and of the same tendency as those which the better emperors of succeeding ages, a Trajan and a Marcus Aurelius, actually attempted to accomplish. Others again were filled with apprehensions for the future; and well, indeed, might they entertain the most alarming presentiments; for when the licentiousness of public morals was growing to a more and more fearful height, and a succession of indolent

emperors was hastening the downfall of the state, the strong fortifications of the northern frontier could afford little protection, and the nations of the north must burst in without resistance upon the empire. This event did really occur, though at a much later period; but all that was to precede that event—the quarter whence the new principle would rise up in the world, that was to overcome Rome herself, and regenerate mankind—all this was certainly not anticipated by any Roman of those times, however generous and exalted might be his sentiments, and profound and penetrative his understanding. Nay, when this phenomenon did actually appear, it was but too evident that they were at first unable to seize and comprehend its meaning and purport. And what was, then, that new power which was to conquer, and did really conquer, the earthly conquerors of the world? The old universal empire of Persia, and the subsequent one of Macedon, had long since passed away, and disappeared from the face of the earth. The oppressive military despotism of Rome had to fear no rival that would at all equal her in power. The influence of the Greek philosophy, which had previously sunk into great degeneracy, was completely debased under the yoke of Roman domination, and barely sufficed to adorn and dignify the Roman sway, still less to work a fundamental change and reform in the Roman government.

It was the divine power of love, tried in sufferings, and sacrificing to high love itself, not only life, but every earthly desire; and from which proceeded the new words of a new life, a new light and moral and divine science, that was to unfold new views of the world, introduce a new organisation of society, and give a new form to human existence. And such was that primitive energy of Christian love, which displayed itself in the internal harmony and close union of the Christian church; in the rapid diffusion of its doctrines through all the countries and among all the nations of the then known world; in its courageous resistance to all the assaults of persecution; in the careful preservation of its purity from all alloy and corruption; in its firmer consolidation and more manifold development in words, and works, and deeds; in writings and in life; that not many generations, and but a few centuries, had passed away, before Christianity became a ruling power in the world—an indirect and spiritual power, indeed, but more than any other active and influential.

A passage on Elias in the Old Testament, which we have already had occasion to cite, may be applied to the imperceptible beginnings of this great moral revolution, produced in the world by a new effort of God's power. When the prophet, from the bottom of his soul, had sighed after death, and had journeyed for the space of forty days towards the holy mountain of Horeb, the splendour and omnipotence of the Deity were revealed to him, and passed before his mortal eyes. There came a great and strong wind, which overthrew the mountains and split the rocks; but, as the Scripture saith, God was not in the wind. There came afterwards a violent earthquake with fire—but God was neither in the earthquake, nor in the fire. Now there arose the soft breath and gentle whistling of a tender air: in this, Elias recognised the immediate presence of his God, and in awe and reverence he veiled his face. Such was the origin of Christianity, as compared with the all-subduing and world-convulsing sway of the conquering nations of preceding ages.

In the last years of Augustus, the first deified emperor, occurs the birth of our Saviour; in the time of Tiberius, the foundation of the Christian religion; and in the reign of Nero, the first perfectly authentic record of that great event in the Roman History. There is, indeed, an account which says that, previously, Tiberius, on the report of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, had received information of the new religion, and had made a formal proposal to the senate to place Christ among the gods, according to the Roman custom, and to declare him worthy of divine honours. It is true, indeed, that the single testimony of Tertullian, on which this account rests, is not of such weight and historical importance as not to be obnoxious to many serious doubts, which perhaps, however, have been carried somewhat too far. It still remains a clear historical testimony on a matter of fact; and as long as this is susceptible of a natural explanation, it argues a perverse spirit of historical criticism, or rather a total absence of all criticism, to be ever suspecting fabrications and supposititious writings. That an account of this great event might, nay, must almost necessarily, have been transmitted to Rome by the Roman procurator of the province of Judea, is proved by the narrative of Tacitus, who connects the name of this governor with the first mention of the Christians. Such an account may have



been easily sent even by the Roman captains, who were in Palestine, and one of whom we know, as an eye-witness, gave such a memorable testimony in favour of the Son of God, who had died upon the cross; for, according to the general tradition of the church, this man afterwards became a Christian. There is, again, in the character of Tiberius, nothing at all at variance with this account; for, however dark, and mistrustful, and cruel, and corrupt might be the character of that emperor, we cannot deny he was possessed of a powerful and profound understanding. He was by no means unsusceptible of religious impressions, nor indifferent on matters of religion; but he followed therein his own peculiar views and opinions; and hence it is quite natural that his attention should be easily drawn to any extraordinary religious event. He detested, and even persecuted, the Egyptian idolatry and the Jewish worship, and ordered that the sacerdotal robes and sacred vessels of their priests should be burned. He had a strong faith in destiny, was somewhat addicted to astrology, and dreaded signs in the heavens. If his hostility towards the Jews, and his persecution of that nation, be alleged as an objection to the truth of this narrative (as if it were absolutely necessary that he should have confounded the Christians with the Jews), we may reply that this is a purely arbitrary hypothesis, and that it is far more natural to conclude, that when Tiberius had received from Pilate, or other Roman captains, certain intelligence of the life and death of our Saviour, he was, no doubt, informed by these eye-witnesses of the hatred and persecution which our Saviour had sustained from the Jews. The single fact, indeed, that Christianity was so much opposed to the pagan worship and the political idolatry of the Romans—as, for instance, to the sacrifice before the image of the emperor—was in all probability not stated nor clearly explained in this first account, composed by persons very little acquainted with the true nature of the new revelation. Otherwise such an account would have produced on a man imbued with Roman prejudices, no other impression but that of aversion and disgust. The idea and proposal itself, of regarding an extraordinary man, endowed with wonderful and divine power, as God, and as worthy of divine honours, has nothing at all improbable in itself, or at all inconsistent with Roman rites and usages, or with Roman opinions respecting gods and deified men. The only thing really improbable in

the whole affair is, that the senate at that time should have dared to oppose and contradict Tiberius in this matter. However, if the senate, as we may easily imagine, were hostile to the proposal of Tiberius, it was easy for them to adopt some evasive form, and indirectly to impede and set aside this matter, which, as it regarded old national rites, fell entirely within their jurisdiction. But this circumstance, as we said before, is the only thing which appears at all exaggerated in this account. It is easy to understand from this how the proposition of Tiberius, which was never carried into execution, should have fallen into complete oblivion, and should never have come to the knowledge of Tacitus; as we may conclude, from his account of the Christians, that he would not otherwise have suffered this circumstance to pass unnoticed. Singular and remarkable as this fact may be, it is of no importance in itself; it forms only a single incident in the strange and contradictory impressions which the new religion produced on the minds of the Romans. A passage of Suetonius, in his history of Claudius, would show that the Christians were confounded with the Jews; for, speaking of that emperor, he says, "he expelled the Jews from the capital, for, at the instigation of *Chrestus*, they were ever exciting troubles in the state." *Chrestus*, in the Greek pronunciation, has the same sound as *Christus*; and we may easily conceive, that what the Christians said of their invisible Lord and Master, that he interdicted them such and such pagan rites, may, in a matter so totally strange and unintelligible to the Romans, have been easily misunderstood, as applying to a chief and party leader actually in existence. In the same way, by the troubles spoken of in the passage above-cited, may be understood the accustomed and just refusal of the Christians to comply with the illicit demands of the pagans.

A fuller light is thrown on this subject by the narrative of Tacitus in his history of Nero; and, however much the Christian religion may be misrepresented by the Roman historian, his account has still a character thoroughly historical, and amidst its very misrepresentations, is perfectly intelligible, if we take care to distinguish the chief historical traits. When Nero, at the height of his crimes and presumption, had set Rome on fire in order to have a lively and dramatic spectacle of the burning Troy, he afterwards strove to screen himself from the odium of this misdeed, and to throw the blame entirely upon the Chris-

tians, who must have been then tolerably numerous in Rome. Tacitus thinks they were not the authors of the conflagration laid to their charge; and his feelings revolt at the inhuman cruelties which Nero inflicted upon them; but, he adds, many horrible things were said of them, and that it was known in particular they were animated by sentiments of hatred towards the whole human race. That we are to understand by this hatred towards the human race nothing more than that rigid rejection by the Christians of all the idolatrous rites, maxims, and doctrines of the heathen world, is perfectly evident of itself. Among the horrible things of which the Christians were accused, we are in all probability to understand *the repasts of Thyestes*, for their enemies make use of that very term in their accusations;—accusations which were received with eager credulity by a populace that held them in abhorrence. Although this charge was no doubt afterwards the effect of malicious calumny and deliberate falsehood, yet it is very possible that a gross misconception may originally have given rise to it, and that this accusation, egregiously false as it was, proceeded from an obscure and confused knowledge of the mystery of the holy sacrifice, and of the reception of the sacrament in that divine feast of love solemnised in the Christian assemblies.

Even in the official report, which the better and well-meaning younger Pliny transmitted to Trajan in the year 120, while he was governor of Pontus and Bithynia, we can clearly discern the embarrassment of the generous Roman, who was at a loss how to consider the new religion, so perfectly mysterious and totally inexplicable did it appear to him; and who in consequence was quite undetermined what he was to do, and how he was to treat the matter. He writes that, according to the confessions wrung from the Christians by torture, after the Roman custom, they were found to entertain an excessive, strange, heterogeneous, and very perverse, faith or superstition; but that in other respects they were people of irreproachable morals, and who, on a certain day of the week, Sunday, assembled in the morning to sing the praises of their God, Christ, and to engage themselves to the fulfilment of the most important precepts of virtue, and that they met again in the evening to enjoy a simple and blameless repast. He adds that their numbers had already increased to such an extent that the altars of paganism were nearly abandoned; and that a great number of



women, boys, and children belonged to their sect. He is at a loss to know, with respect to the latter, whether he should make any difference in the degree of punishment which, it appears, they have inevitably incurred under the old Romans laws against all societies and fraternities not sanctioned by the state ; and on this subject he demands further instructions from the emperor, in this memorable official letter, which is still extant, and contains the most ancient portrait of the Christians drawn by a Roman hand.

Thus then, in this period of the world, in this decisive crisis between ancient and modern times, in this great central point of history, stood two powers opposed to each other.—On one hand, we behold Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero, the earthly gods, and absolute masters of the world, in all the pomp and splendour of ancient paganism—standing, as it were, on the very summit and verge of the old world, now tottering to its ruin :—and, on the other hand, we trace the obscure rise of an almost imperceptible point of light, from which the whole modern world was to spring, and whose further progress and full development, through all succeeding ages, constitutes the true purport of *modern history*.

END OF LECTURE IX.

## LECTURE X.

On the Christian Point of View in the Philosophy of History.—The Origin of Christianity, considered in reference to the Political World.—Decline of the Roman Empire.

A REGULAR history of the life of our Saviour, recounted like any other historical occurrence, would, in my opinion, be out of place in a philosophy of history. The subject is either too vast for profane history, or in its first beginnings too obscure, whether we consider its internal importance, or in a mere historical point of view, its outward appearance. A thinking, and in his way well-thinking Roman, when he had obtained a more accurate knowledge of the life of our Saviour from the accounts of the Roman procurator, or other Roman dignitaries in Palestine, might have expressed himself respecting the whole transaction in the following terms: "This is a very extraordinary man, endued with wonderful and divine power (for such vague and general admiration might well be indulged in by a heathen, who yet adhered to the fundamental doctrines of his ancestral faith), a man who, he would continue to say, has produced a great moral revolution in minds, and was, according to the most credible testimony, of the purest character and most rigid morals, who taught much that was sublime on the immortality of the soul and the secrets of futurity; but who was accused by his enemies, and delivered over to death by his own people." Such, perhaps, would have been the judgment of a Tacitus, had he drawn his information from better and less polluted sources. So long, however, as all these transactions were confined to the small province of Judea, the soundest and best constituted Roman mind could have scarcely felt a more than passing regret at the perpetration of so signal an act of private injustice, and would, in other respects, have not regarded it as an event which could, in a Roman point of view, be termed historical, or worthy to occupy a place in the more extended circle of his own world.

It was only when Christianity had become a power in the

world—the principle of a new life, and of a new form of life totally differing from all preceding forms of existence, that it began to attract the attention of the Romans, as a remarkable historical occurrence. How perfectly unintelligible, strange, and mysterious, this mighty event at its origin, and for a long time afterwards, appeared to the Romans; how erroneous and absurd were their opinions and conduct in regard to the Christian religion, we have already shown by some characteristic examples.

On the other hand, when we view the whole transaction with the eye of faith—when we consider all that has since grown up in the world out of beginnings apparently so small—the case changes its aspect in our regard; and we are then inclined to believe that the mysteries and miracles of our Saviour's life and death—nay, the whole system of his doctrine, which is intimately connected with those mysteries and miracles, and is itself the greatest mystery and miracle, should be abandoned exclusively to religion, and, as they transcend the ordinary sphere of history would be misplaced in a work of this nature. I will, therefore, pre-suppose a knowledge of these sacred mysteries, and, without entering into any examination of them, will endeavour to describe the state of the world, and the aspect of society, when the Christian religion first made its appearance. A notice of some particular points of doctrine, connected with politics and history, either in respect to the past or to the future, is by no means incompatible with my plan; but a complete examination of the whole system of Christian doctrines, as of any other great system of doctrine or philosophy, would, for the reason I have alleged, be quite misplaced in a work of this description. I will, in the next place, endeavour to show the historical influence which this divine power has exerted, and point out how, from its very origin, and still more in its progress, it entirely renovated the face of the world.

Doubtless, the philosophy of history forms an essential part of the science of divine and human things—things which in the mode of conceiving or treating them, should be rarely and even never entirely separated. For how is it possible to attain to a just and correct knowledge of human things, in any department of life and science, unless they be viewed in relation to, and connexion with, the divine principle which animates or directs them?

A certain medium, however, is to be observed, and the limits



must be clearly and accurately traced between divine and human things, lest the one department should be confounded with the other. For as it is very prejudicial to religion to make it merely a matter of learned historical research; so it is inconsistent with the object of historical philosophy to transform it into a mere series of religious meditations. Undoubtedly, historical philosophy can, and ought, to assume the divine principle in man—the divine image planted in the human breast—as the great pivot of human destiny, the main and essential point in universal history, and the restoration of that image as the proper purpose of mankind.

Thus the philosophic historian may endeavour, as I have attempted, to point out the divine truth contained in the primitive revelation, the original word which was current among the nations of the primitive age, in the second period of the world—the decisive crisis, between ancient and modern times—he will discover in the Christian religion, the sole principle of the subsequent progress of mankind: and the distinctive character and intellectual importance of the third or last epoch of the world, he will find only in that light, which, emerging from the primitive revelation, and the religion of love established by the Redeemer, has shone ever clearer and brighter with the progress of ages, and has changed and regenerated not only government and science, but the whole system of human life. Here is the principle which furnishes the plan of classification for all the great epochs of history. From this philosophic survey of history, the historian, in the accomplishment of his task, may, with great propriety, point out and illustrate the ways and views of Divine Providence in the conduct of particular nations and ages, and in the destiny of remarkable personages, or historical characters, when those views and ways are strikingly perceptible to our feelings. Yet it is better that this train of observations should not be too systematically prosecuted, but should be introduced occasionally only; and as it were episodically, in those passages of history, where such reflections naturally present themselves: and they should ever be confined within the limits of a modest suggestion; for all these reflections are only the esoteric spirit—the internal religious idea of history. Otherwise, the historian will be exposed to the danger of introducing a system of providential designs prematurely formed according to human insight and human sagacity, into the yet unfinished drama of the world's history, whose comprehensive vastness and hidden mysteries,

besides, far exceed the narrow limits of all that man can conceive, judge, and know, with certainty. And this is a defect which many writers have not entirely avoided in their otherwise very religious meditations on universal history. So far, however, as the historian confines his train of reflections within the modest limits of a mere partial explanation, and does not prematurely anticipate the general scheme of divine polity, or plunge too deeply, and with presumptuous confidence, into its details; he will find much and obvious matter for such considerations, in the visible selection of particular individuals, and particular nations, and even ages, for the accomplishment of certain ends, for the attainment on their part of prosperity, glory, or some high object in some particular sphere. But this power thus allotted to particular individuals or to particular nations, exerts even at the time a general influence on the fate of mankind, and evidently accomplishes the designs of Providence with regard to the world at large, forms a point of transition from past ages, or opens a passage to some manifestation of Divine Power, with respect to the future. In the progress of human civilisation, such designs are frequently manifest. Nay, on the great question of the permission of evil, when it exerts a widely destructive influence in the moral and physical world, and on the views of God in that permission, the enlightened historian may sometimes succeed, if not in penetrating into the hidden decrees of divine wisdom, yet at least in uplifting a corner of the mysterious veil which covers them. In particular phenomena of history—such, for example, as the destruction of a whole nation, the Jews for instance; or in the overwhelming calamities, the general miseries inflicted on a corrupt age, manifesting, clearly as they do, the retributive justice of God—calamities which, when regarded from this point of view (and it is only from this point of view they can be rightly judged), appear like a partial judgment of the world—in all such historical phenomena, a modest reference to the final causes of such events may be exceedingly appropriate. This idea of divine justice, and of God's judgments on the world exemplified in history, belongs undoubtedly to the province of historical philosophy; and, as man's resemblance to his Maker constitutes the first foundation-stone of history, this more practical principle, relating as it does to real life and all its mighty phenomena, forms the second.

But the mystery of grace in the divine redemption of mankind,

transcends the sphere of profane history. The Christian philosophy of history must indeed tacitly pre-suppose the truth of that mystery, and assume it as known, and indeed as self evident to all well-thinking persons—it must even, under the inspiration of this faith, refer it to very many, the greater part, indeed almost all, of the facts and phenomena of history—but it should forbear to introduce it into its own province, and should leave it to the sanctuary of religion. In the same way, whenever philosophy attempts to incorporate and rank this mystery with her own speculative conceptions, the consequence must ever be hurtful to religion; for, as philosophy thus attempts to explain and, as it were, deduce this mystery from her own speculations, the mystery of redemption ceases to be a divine fact, and it is only as such that it is, and can be, the true and eternal foundation of religion. I wish here expressly to do away with an opinion which is completely unhistorical, and even subversive of all history. I cannot more truly and succinctly designate this opinion, than by stating it as follows:—Christ, to say it in one word was a Jewish Socrates, and this purest, noblest, and sublimest of all ethical teachers (according to the rationalists' interpretation of his history) met with a fate no less deplorable for mankind than that which befel the Athenian philosopher, and the wisest of all the Grecian sages. In reply to this, one observation only need be made—*If Christ were not more than a Socrates, then a Socrates he was not.\** But this opinion is not only unhistorical, or, to speak more properly, *anti-historical*, because it is in utter opposition to all covenants, testimonies, authentic records, and even Christ's express declarations; but fully as much, and even still more on this account, that if we once remove this divine key-stone in the arch of universal history, the whole fabric of

\* In confirmation of this pithy sentence of Schlegel's, I may cite a remarkable passage from the celebrated Lessing, which, as coming from an infidel, may perhaps have more weight with the Unitarian. "If Christ," he says, "is not truly God, then Mohammedanism was an undoubted improvement on the Christian religion: Mahomet, on such a supposition, would indisputably have been a greater man than Christ, as he would have been far more veracious, more circumspect, and more zealous for the honour of God, since Christ, by his expressions, would have given dangerous occasion for idolatry; while, on the other hand, not a single expression of the kind can be laid to the charge of Mahomet."—*Lessing's Beiträge zur Geschichte und Litteratur*. Vol. II. p. 410.  
—*Trans.*



the world's history falls to ruin—for its only foundation is this new manifestation of God's power in the crisis of time—this hope in God abiding unto the end. For, although I do not consider a formal demonstration of the truth of the Christian religion as falling within the province of profane history; yet the belief of its truth, a faith in its dogmas, is the only clue in such investigations. Without this faith, the whole history of the world would be nought else than an insoluble enigma—an inextricable labyrinth—a huge pile of the blocks and fragments of an unfinished edifice—and the great tragedy of humanity would remain devoid of all proper result.

Confining myself within those limits which the very nature of the subject, and the force of circumstances prescribe, and which I have here thought it necessary to mark out with exactness, I shall now, in order to see under what circumstances Christianity first arose in the world, and appeared on the domain of history, direct your attention more immediately to the Jewish state.

Dependent at first on the Grecian dynasty of Egypt, and at a subsequent period subdued by the sovereigns of the new Syrian monarchy, which sprang out of the dismemberment of the Macedonian empire, the more virtuous portion of the Hebrew people evinced, under the religious persecution they had to sustain from the latter monarchs, much constancy in the old faith of their fathers; for which, indeed, several of the heroic family of the Maccabees had the courage to lay down their lives. From these rulers they were rescued by the Romans, who took them under their powerful protection, which, with the Jews, as with all other nations, was soon transformed into a systematic and very oppressive domination. The Jewish people were so far involved in the civil war between Cæsar and Pompey, that each party favoured that aspirant to the throne of Judea, most favourable to its own designs. Under the monarchy of Augustus, Herod, who was created tributary sovereign of Palestine about forty years before the Christian era, was the last who had been promoted to sovereignty amid this conflict of parties. The temple of Jerusalem, that had been rebuilt with the permission of Cyrus, still remained in all its pomp and grandeur. If a profane curiosity had tempted Crassus and Pompey to intrude within its sanctuary, on the other hand, the munificence of Herod had added to its size and increased its decorations. Although Herod ever retained a partiality for Roman customs, and

still more for Grecian opinions, yet the temple of Jerusalem—considered, not as the august sanctuary of Heaven's revelations to the chosen people, but as the centre of attraction for the Jewish nation, situated as it was in the midst of a great commercial city (one of the largest in all Western Asia), and forming at once the treasury, and by its close proximity to the citadel, the rampart of the city and of the state—must have been regarded by Herod as the seat of his power, and the nearest object of his ambition. There were at that period among the Jews two parties, which, like those of the Patricians and Plebeians in the civil wars of Rome, bear some resemblance to the parties that at present divide the world: although in their relative position towards each other, as well as in their internal character and tendency, there are many important points which distinguish them from the parties at present existing. Though from the predominant spirit and peculiar constitution of the Jewish people, the subjects of contention between the two parties related chiefly or more immediately to matters of religion; yet politics were not entirely excluded from their disputes, which embraced in general the whole of human life and its various relations. The Pharisees were the chief scribes and doctors of the law, and in the state, the honoured patricians of the Hebrews, who sought to maintain the ancient faith and ancient constitution of their country with its rights and jurisprudence adhering indeed with a rigid scrupulosity, and a contentious subtlety to the letter of the old law, while they had long forgotten its divine spirit, and were notorious for their attachment to their own interests, their selfish feelings, and false and contracted views. As they acknowledged, and respected with the most scrupulous fidelity all existing laws, they sided, apparently at least, with the Romans, though they never entertained a cordial attachment for those conquerors, and indeed they ever cherished the hope of being able to ensnare the great teacher, so beloved by the Jewish people, into a declaration against the Roman rule, as in their limited views they conceived he must, sooner or later, be necessarily driven to that expedient, in order to sustain his popularity. But it cannot be doubted that the cause which the Pharisees defended was, on the whole, the legitimate cause of the Hebrews of that period, since our Saviour himself expressly acknowledged this, when he said of the Pharisees,—“They sit in the chair of Moses, and whatsoever they command you, that

do ye." It was precisely because they had made the old law, and the cause of God, their own cause, that so much was exacted of them; and that they were judged with so much severity by our Saviour; apparently with greater severity than were the Sadducees themselves, who by an Epicurean philosophy, and a latitudinarian system of morals, had fallen almost entirely from the faith, had affixed a mere human interpretation to Scripture, and had even called in question the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. If in this sect there were individuals entertaining purer and more exalted notions of the truth, we must regard them rather as happy and honourable exceptions. We must not, besides, forget, that the severe judgments on the Pharisees, which occur in Scripture, refer only to the more degenerate among them—a great portion, doubtless, perhaps the greater part; but by no means include the whole sect or body, among whom were many worthy individuals.

We ought also to recollect that the Apostle Paul was a Pharisee, and though a well-intentioned, yet a very zealous one, for all his writings show the man who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel: the latter again was the grandson of the illustrious Hellel, who is named as one of the last great doctors of the Hebrews, who was profoundly versed in their sacred traditions, and was, indeed, one of the last pillars of the synagogue. The Jewish history or tradition mentions seven species of false Pharisees, to whom all the reproaches of our Saviour are perfectly applicable. Many other Pharisees, besides the Apostle Paul, are mentioned with honour in holy writ, as friends and disciples of our Redeemer, though they had not the courage openly to declare themselves his followers.

Whenever, in the history of mankind, we arrive at some epoch of great crisis, or momentous collision, we find invariably, and in all countries, two contending parties like these appearing at once on the historical arena, though in forms or positions variously modified. The party defending antiquity, often adheres only to the dead letter of rigid law, forgetting its inward sense and living spirit; while the opposite party, which has a strong conviction that the world stands in need of a new legislation, and that the epoch of a new legislation approaches, is not entirely in the wrong. But when the members of the latter party have lost all faith in the sacred traditions of the past, and have consequently forgotten that the great work of regeneration can



emanate from God only ; they conceive that it is in their power to accomplish this work—nay, they fancy they have already succeeded in their enterprise, while all their futile attempts can accomplish nought but a total revolution in the past—a revolution brought about either by external violence, or, in its best and mildest form, by the internal ruin of moral principle and feeling. Between these extreme and conflicting parties, individuals are often found who fly from the field of contention, and seek out a higher asylum, at least for themselves. Such were those small communities of holy contemplatives that then existed among the Jews, the Essenians in Palestine, and the Therapuntæ in Egypt ; but these ascetics, limited in number, formed a trifling exception by the side of the two great predominant sects. It was between these two leading parties—on the one hand, the narrow-minded and selfish Jewish legitimatists—stiff adherents to the letter of the law ; and, on the other hand, the liberal illuminés ;—between the old promises and expectations of the Hebrews, and the Roman dominion, now become and acknowledged to be legitimate,—that our Saviour had to steer ; and it required a more than human prudence to traverse this critical period, unaffected by the spirit of contending factions. “Give unto Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar,” was his simple declaration, when men sought to entrap him by their worldly cunning : and this declaration has remained a fundamental precept of Christianity, and will continue unchanged to the end of time. And so will that other oracle, “Thou art a rock, and upon this rock I will build my church ;” in this there is a clear and distinct precept how Christians were to treat those pagan pretensions of the Romans which regarded acts of political idolatry, such as the sacrifice before the image of the emperor, and acts of a similar kind ; and how, as witnesses of the truth against all the powers of earth, they were to seal their testimony with their blood. The capital error of the Jews lay in this, that in the Deliverer, promised to them of old, they now generally expected an earthly liberator destined to emancipate them from the oppressive yoke of the Romans, and to restore their national empire to its highest glory and splendour. And, indeed, had they not carried their notions on this point to such extreme lengths, and with such unyielding obstinacy, much might have been alleged in their excuse. According to the usual character of prophetic speech, the portrait of a spiritual Deliverer, invested

with real glory and pomp, had been drawn in such vivid colours in those ancient prophecies, that the description might, in many passages at least, be easily mistaken for one of an earthly monarch. Or, to express my meaning with greater accuracy and precision, as it is the peculiar character of sacred prophecy to represent events about to follow, in immediate contact with the ultimate objects to which they tend, there are often in those prophetic descriptions of the future prosperity of the chosen people, many passages on the remote period of the last ages of the world, and on the universal triumph of Christianity throughout the earth at the end of time ; there are often, we say, many of those passages which also refer and indeed contain the closest allusions to the commencement of the Christian redemption. In the same way, although in a different sort of subject, we see our Saviour himself foretell the impending ruin of Jerusalem and of the Jewish nation, while his lamentations are closely linked, and almost confounded with, prophetic warnings respecting the awful and terrific scenes of latter times, and the approaching day of general account ; although both these events, the ruin of the temporal Jerusalem, and the last glorious transformation of nature, when creation shall be consummated, and a new heaven and a new earth shall spring into existence, are to be strictly regarded as real and historical. So close an attention, and so great a power of discrimination are requisite to distinguish between parts, to combine the whole, and place each particular fact in its proper point of view. But the best excuse that can be offered for the Jews, in this respect, is the fact, as the Scripture clearly sheweth, that all the followers of our Saviour, and his most trusty disciples, were at first under the same delusion, and for a long time believed that, though the right moment had not yet arrived, still their master would certainly appear as the earthly Deliverer and Monarch of his nation ; and indeed the idea of his sufferings and death was so abhorrent to their feelings that they even dared to express their disapprobation, and upbraid their Saviour for entertaining such thoughts ; for it was only at a much later period the bandage fell from their eyes. And the great reproach which we are to make the Jews is that they should have adhered with such obstinacy to an error, very excusable under certain circumstances, and that after all they had heard, seen, and experienced, they should have still closed their eyes against the light. The conduct of our Saviour to-

wards the Jews is often represented in a manner little conformable to historic truth, and to the spirit and character of this mighty revolution, when it is said that he entirely abrogated the whole system of the Mosaic law. The outward scaffolding was indeed removed, when it had ceased to be necessary; such were all those laws which applied only to that state of strict separation from heathen nations, which at an earlier period had been of such absolute importance. Very many things were still retained; and all now received in the fulfilment a higher spiritual signification; and this was natural, when we consider that in Judaism itself every thing which had not been designed merely for local and temporary wants, from the very commencement of that dispensation, was typical of Christianity. The twelve apostles, as well as the first seventy-two disciples were taken exclusively from the chosen people, and even, in this respect, the divine promises were completely fulfilled, and literally observed. The constitution of the ancient hierarchy has very evidently furnished the pattern for that of the Christian priesthood; though this of course has been adapted to the wider circle of a higher and more spiritual system. The expression, "My kingdom is not *of* this world," does not imply that it was not to be *in* this world a real and effective power, with a form and organisation clearly defined. Many have read so much, or inferred so much, from this declaration, that they could not adopt an easier or more polite method of shutting out this divine empire of truth from the world. In the hours of the greatest solemnity, the divine Master revealed to his disciples the hidden sense of the ancient revelation in all the plentitude of its mysteries. As the Saviour himself said that every word and syllable of the old law must be literally fulfilled; as in general the spiritual interpretation of the divine oracles is by no means inconsistent with their literal truth and inviolable sanctity; so the same remark will apply to the new revelation, in which every word and every syllable of prophecy will receive a full and practical accomplishment before the consummation of time. Even in another point of view particularly worthy the consideration of the historian, Christianity must be regarded only as a divine continuation, a higher and more expansive form, or spiritual renovation, of the Mosaic institution; and was so intended by its divine Founder; namely, in those aspirations after futurity, which now so exclusively directed the whole of human life, and its various views.



The law of divine wisdom, by which earthly existence is to be looked upon only as a state of expectation, of preparation, and of struggle—a view of life alone accordant with human nature—that law has retained its full force in the new covenant. For the primitive Christians, death was what the Saviour said of himself, a return, a passing unto the Father, but life was one ceaseless struggle. For him who unto the end fought steadfast in this struggle, the angel of death was divested of his terrors; he was a celestial messenger of peace, that brought to the Christian the bright garland of victory, and the crown of eternal life; in this faith and in these sentiments, did the saints live and the martyrs die. And as every human soul is conducted to the realms above by the gentle hand of its divine guardian; so the Saviour himself has announced to all mankind, in many prophetic passages, that when the period of the dissolution of the world shall approach, he himself will return to the earth, will renovate the face of all things, and bring them to a close. So lively an assurance had the first Christians of the immediate presence of their invisible lord and guide, so vivid a hope did they entertain of his speedy return to the earth; that, in order to check the aspirations of a zeal that would accelerate the period of consummation so ardently desired, Divine Providence judged it necessary that the Prophet of the New Testament should close the volume of eternal revelation with that long succession of ages that were to witness the progressive struggle of humanity—all those centuries of Christianity that mankind was yet to traverse, before the promise should be fulfilled, and in the fulness of time the final and universal triumph of Christianity throughout the earth should be accomplished, for all mankind must be gathered into one fold, and under one Shepherd. According to the spirit and precept of the Christian religion, man must at every moment be prepared; but he must not, in a presumptuous ardour, accelerate the term of existence fixed by the wisdom of Almighty God. Thus, all those Christians who, during the times of the most violent persecution of the church under the Romans, courted the danger, and would not await the honour of martyrdom, were warned that such conduct was by no means conformable to the will of God; as it often happened that those who, by such an overweening confidence in their own strength, had wantonly rushed to the field of danger, succumbed under their torments, and fell from the faith.

Had the Jews but opened their eyes in the right time ; had they acknowledged the divine fulfilment of ancient promises in the mission of Christ, which was in fact far more exalted and more splendid than any thing they had expected ; and had all, or even the greater part, of the nation embraced Christianity ; they would have become the mighty stem—the great foundation—the central point of all modern history, and all modern life. But as they did not correspond to this call of Divine Providence, a call fully justified by their circumstances, their early history, and the prerogatives which the Almighty had once accorded to them above all other nations : the justice of God required that they should now receive a signal chastisement, that they should be deprived of their national existence, dispersed among all the nations of the earth ; and that, in this state of ruin and dispersion, they should serve as a memorable example to the world. But this humiliation of the Jews, which was calculated to draw down the contempt of the heathen, who looked only to outward things, should have never given rise to oppression or ill-treatment among Christian nations ; and the more so, as it is still a problem whether any other people placed in a similar situation, and warped by selfish prejudices, and old and deep-rooted errors, would have done better ; or whether mankind in general, subjected to a similar trial, would have come off more successfully.

The old temple of the holy city was not, like the idolatrous temples of the heathens, a mere magnificent monument of national glory, adorned with all the splendour of art ; but the idea and plan of the whole structure, its minutest parts, every stone, and every cipher, were clearly indicative and profoundly symbolical of that invisible temple, that mighty city, that divine kingdom of peace, which Christ was to establish on earth, and which he had now at length come to establish. Even the name of Jerusalem, according to the Hebrew signification of the word, has the emblematic sense of revelation and foundation, or city of peace, by which is understood not a mere earthly and transitory peace, but that higher and divine peace which forms the subject of all the promises made unto the chosen people. This prophetic sense and typical design of the holy city is so closely connected with the origin and whole idea of the city, that in some passages of the Old Testament such figurative expressions are used, as if the whole business, nay the whole life, of man had no other object “than to build up the walls of Jerusalem ;” in

the same way as if a Christian moralist were to say, the proper end and ultimate object of mankind, and of the history of all nations and ages, is the kingdom of God, that is to say, the ever wider diffusion and firmer consolidation of Christian truth and Christian perfection throughout the world. When the spiritual and internal sense of this mighty and historical hieroglyph of the Jewish people was no longer understood; when the mighty truths which it embodied, at the very moment they were about to receive their full explanation and perfect development, were misunderstood and rejected; what was more natural than that the emblem, which had lost its meaning, should be effaced, the temple destroyed, and the city itself levelled and razed by the arm of divine justice? This is the view which the Christian historian must take of that mighty and fearful catastrophe which now befell Jerusalem, and the whole Jewish people, under Vespasian; and indeed the impression which this event made on the Jews, though somewhat diversified by national sentiments, is, in all essential points, conformable to our own feelings. That in every such widely destructive disaster, which by divine permission may afflict any portion of the human race, the loving wisdom of God will know how to take each individual soul under its special protection, and will guard and spare it, at least, in its immortal part, is a truth so evident to every religious mind, that it is unnecessary to enforce it at any length. If, as the Scripture saith, "the hairs on a man's head are numbered," so will each day, nay each hour, each pulsation of human existence, be counted; yea, every heartfelt tear the eye of sorrow shall shed, will be reckoned by the guardian spirit of eternal love. But this religious regard for the fate of individuals, and this humane sympathy with their misfortunes, must be kept within its proper sphere in historical disquisitions, where the principal design is to study and observe, as far as the limited perception of man will permit, the mighty course of divine justice, through all ages of the world.

When the Jews were disappointed in the hope they had entertained of a liberator, who was to be sent from above armed with divine power to deliver them from the stern yoke of Roman domination; exasperated by the ever-increasing tyranny of their masters, after several partial insurrections, the whole nation, three-and-thirty years after the death of our Lord, broke out into open rebellion; and the whole country, torn by infuriated factions, which fanatic hate inspired with the courage of despair, exhibited all the horrors of the most terrific revolution. The



savage warfare of the Romans in such a deadly struggle, we have already learned from the example of Carthage; for however mild and benevolent might be the personal character of Titus, it was out of his power to introduce any change in the system of war; and the number of men that perished in the siege and ravages of the holy city is estimated at 1,300,000; including the small number that were led away captives, or reserved to grace the triumph of the conqueror. The Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the city, which had been totally destroyed, under the new and pagan name of *Ælia Capitolina*, and even erected within it a temple to Jupiter: but no Jew was permitted to enter within its walls. At a later period the Emperor Julian had intended to re-establish the Jews in their ancient city, and in all probability it was his hostility to Christianity which had inspired him with the design; but unexpected events and physical obstacles\* opposed the execution of this plan.

The Jewish covenant and the old revelation of the Hebrews formed the chief corner-stone on which Christianity was founded; and the first apostles of the new religion were all chosen from among that people. The Scriptures of the new covenant were composed in the Greek tongue, and the first apologies, and other expositions of faith, or books of instruction by the primitive fathers, were mostly written in the same language. We may therefore consider this language as forming the second foundation-stone of the Christian edifice. Though the political consequences of the Macedonian conquests in Asia were not of any permanence, yet the influence which those conquests have exerted on the intellectual character of nations, the ascendancy which they gave to the Greeks over the whole civilised world of that period, were by no means unimportant. It was by means of these conquests that the philosophy and literature of the Greeks became, along with their language, predominant in Egypt and the western countries of Asia; and hence this language was adopted as the original tongue of Christianity; because no other at that period had attained such intellectual refinement, or such general diffusion. As in human society every class and condition of life, nay, every individual, by the peculiar rights and advantages which each exclusively enjoys, still serves the community, and contributes to the weal of others, unconsciously and without precisely wishing it; so

\* By this expression, Schlegel does not mean to question the supernatural agency that produced those obstacles.—*Trans.*

in the history of the world, and in the progress of nations, all things are closely interlinked, and one serves as the instrument, auxiliary, or bond of union, to the other; and it was not one of the least important results of the Greek science and language, that the two points wherein that nation had risen to the greatest eminence, and was endowed with the greatest power, should both have been so nearly allied with the cause of Christianity, even from its origin. The Roman empire was the third foundation-stone of the Christian religion; for its vast extent facilitated in a singular manner the early and very rapid diffusion of Christianity, and formed, indeed, the groundwork on which the fabric of the new church was first constructed.

In the history of the primitive church, historians are wont to separate the different branches of their subject, which form so many different parts of a single whole, and thus to describe separately the dogmas and doctrines of the church, its holy rites and sacraments, its liturgies and festivals, and next its moral condition and external relations; and this division of the subject may, no doubt, very well answer the special design of such ecclesiastical histories. But if we wish to take a more general view of the subject, to seize the spirit of Christianity, and form a just, true, and lively conception of the primitive church, we must be particularly careful not to forget in the investigation of those several heads, that they formed one undivided and living whole in the eyes of the first Christians, amid the overflowing fulness of a new moral life; and of this spirit of unity, as well as of the wonderful energy of faith and love which was its never-failing source, it is almost impossible for us to form a full and adequate notion. Christianity, in its primitive influence, was like an electric stroke, which traversed the world with the rapidity of lightning—like a magnetic fluid of life, which united even the most distant members of humanity in one animating pulsation. Public prayer and the sacred mysteries formed a stronger and closer bond of love among men, than the still sacred ties of kindred and earthly affection. Some persons have affected to compare the secret assemblies of the primitive Christians with the pagan mysteries; and undoubtedly it was only in secret, and in the retired and obscure oratory, that the first followers of Christ could gather together amid the fury of general persecution. But, from a competent

knowledge which we possess of the import of those pagan mysteries, they had about as much resemblance to the religious assemblies of the primitive Christians, as the divine sacrifice of holy commemoration, and the chalice consecrated with the blood of the eternal covenant, bore to the human sacrifices of the Cainites. The Christians saw and felt the presence of their invisible King and eternal Lord; and when their souls overflowed with the plenitude of spiritual and heavenly life, how could they value earthly existence, and how must they not have been willing to sacrifice it in the struggle against the powers of darkness; for that struggle formed the whole and proper business of their lives?—Hence we can understand the reason of the otherwise incredibly rapid diffusion of Christianity through all the provinces, and even sometimes beyond the limits, of the vast empire of Rome;—like a heavenly flame, it ran through all life, kindling, where it found congenial sympathy, all that it touched into a kindred fervour. Hence, along with that mighty spirit of love which produced so rapid a spread of the Christian religion, and which united in the closest bonds the first Christian communities, that energy of faith which inspired such heroic fortitude under the dreadful and oft-renewed persecutions of the Romans. The first persecution under Nero was only a momentary freak of blood-thirsty tyranny—a passing trait of that monster's cruelty. The first regular edict against the Christians in the Roman empire was passed by Domitian in the 87th year of our era, and, according to a custom which had been borrowed from the Jews, he assimilated the offence of dissent from the national religion to the crime of high treason. The better Nerva softened the rigour of this law, and declared that the denunciations of slaves against their masters were not to be received, but, on the contrary, such informers were to be severely punished. Trajan also, on the before-mentioned report of the younger Pliny, decided, in the 120th year of our era, that the Christians, who were then uncommonly numerous, were not to be sought after, but that, when denounced, they should be punished according to the law existing against such religious associations and communities. But notwithstanding all these apparent mitigations of severity introduced by the better emperors, the criminal jurisprudence of the Romans, like their foreign warfare, ever remained most atrocious; and in the passages and allusions which are to found



in ancient historians, concur with the general voice of Christian tradition in stating the prodigious cruelties inflicted on the Christians in those persecutions. In general Hadrian pursued that milder and middle course of policy which Trajan had commenced before him ; he approved of legal and judicial persecutions against the Christians, but he strictly prohibited those tumultuary attacks which were the mere ebullitions of popular hatred. With many vicissitudes, Christianity remained in this state until the reign of Diocletian, who, pursuing a far more systematic plan than most of his predecessors, attempted entirely to root it out ; but this was no longer possible, and the growing church received its first formal edict of pacification at the hands of the emperor Constantine. The pagan enthusiast Julian attempted a second time to subvert it, but it was now too late. In the struggle against pagan cruelty and Roman persecution, Christianity had come off victorious ; in bondage, and under every species of suffering, it had proved the invincible might of the divine arm ;—and, next to the apostles, the martyrs, so highly revered by the gratitude of Christians, must occupy the second place among those who were instrumental in bringing about this mighty renovation of society, and who sealed their efforts with their blood. But we must not imagine that the martyrs, as mere men, and by their unassisted strength, could have endured such dreadful torments with such unshaken constancy ; or, again, that they were the mere unconscious instruments of a divine fatality, without the co-operation of their free, clear, and steadfast will. By the side of those who were constant, many individuals were found that were not so,—many, who, overcome by suffering, delivered up the holy Scriptures, or entirely apostatised from the faith and sacrificed to idols ; so that it was afterwards a matter of dispute, how far the *lapsed* could be pardoned and received again into the church.

After that period was past which had witnessed the reign of those inhuman tyrants that immediately succeeded Augustus, several of the more virtuous emperors sought by various expedients to bring about the moral regeneration of the people and empire of Rome. Trajan, who possessed much of the rectitude and old martial virtues that belonged to the elder and better period of Rome, sought to introduce these again ; and, though the effects of his policy were transient, they were still

beneficial. Hadrian endeavoured to re-animate paganism, and to make it once more the basis of the empire and of public life ; for this purpose, he had recourse especially to the more profound and austere theology of Egypt ; and that new Egyptian style which characterises the later monuments of Roman art, was connected with the emperor's predilection for the old religion of Egypt. But the healthy vigour, the moral regeneration of public life, and of the empire itself, could not now be obtained by the maintenance or firmer consolidation, of the pagan religion ; on the contrary, it is in the erroneous nature of the primitive paganism of Rome that we must seek for the principal cause why, even in that elder period now so highly extolled, and which certainly was at least better, a true, pure, and stable system of morals and politics could never take root and flourish. Under the two Antonines, the severe morality of Stoicism was regarded as the vital principle of moral regeneration and political reform, and a practical application of its principles was sought for on all sides. And certainly if the Stoical philosophy, with its mere dead letter of rigid justice, and correct morality, unsupported by the divine maxims of right faith, and that spirit of exalted love which true faith alone can impart, could have accomplished this high design ;—if it had possessed within itself this mighty source ; this creative energy of moral and social life ; the serious determination and personal virtues of those imperial Stoics might indeed have promised to the declining age of Rome the fulfilment of the last hope to which paganism yet clung. But that which does not rest on the basis of truth, can receive no life from any external cause ; and it can impart no life to any thing without, because it is decayed within, and when the illusive bloom of first youth has fled, it sinks inevitably into its native corruption. “When the Lord doth not build the house,” saith the Psalmist, “those who would build it labour in vain.” To the better times that had witnessed the rule of the three or four great monarchs we have mentioned, the reign of a Commodus succeeded ; and thus the empire, down to the time of Diocletian, beheld a constant mutation of rulers, sometimes benevolent, or at least comparatively good, whose reigns however were often but of short duration, sometimes weak and spiritless, and sometimes again tyrants of the most abject and atrocious cast. Among these latter sovereigns however, who

in cruelty and arbitrary caprice resembled the first successors of Augustus, there were no characters possessed of that strong Roman sense which distinguished Tiberius; and the empire in their hands assumed daily more and more a thoroughly effeminate and Oriental complexion.

Nothing was more subject to chance than the right of succession in the Roman empire, where the arbitrary application of the Roman principle of adoption opened a wide field to the contention of parties; without including the frequent recurrence of conspiracies in a military empire, which, as it was formed by a military conspiracy, ever retained the stamp of its origin. Augustus had employed his whole life, not without apparent success, for a time at least, in endeavouring to give to authority, acquired by force of arms, the colour and forms of legitimacy. But how could it ever be forgotten that he, as well as Cæsar, had been raised to the imperial throne by the army, and amid the struggles of factions, conspiracies, and civil wars. The soldiers knew this, and recollected but too well the source whence the supreme power in the state had emanated. The influence of the Prætorians, especially, was, from their origin, very considerable, as they surrounded the emperor, and formed his body-guard. By virtue of his office, the leader of the Prætorians had a sort of negative and controlling power, like that of the censor and popular tribune in the ancient republic, except that this functionary wielded the sword,—a power in some degree acknowledged by the emperor himself, as it was accounted one of the highest merits of Trajan, that to the chief of that troop which defended the person, and often decided the fate of the emperor, he delivered the sword with these words: “For me, if I govern well—against me, if I should become a tyrant.”

Thus the empire was entirely abandoned to chance and caprice, and as its origin was military, it remained unto the end essentially a military despotism. The more powerful legions that were quartered in the most important provinces, especially in those of the frontiers, soon began to feel that they were far superior in numbers and strength to the effeminate Prætorians of the capital. Several emperors were elected and proclaimed by these legions; and in the number, such even as were not Romans, and were of barbarian extraction; for it happened that, in the provincial legions, many foreigners, especially



Germans, were engaged in the Roman service in the provinces on the north-western frontier. Several of the emperors thus chosen by the legions, continued to reside where the centre of their power existed—in the station, or in some provincial capital conveniently situated. The senate had long been but a mere shadow of its former greatness ; even the capital began to lose much of its importance.

At the same time the repeated incursions of the northern nations ever rendered a general invasion more imminent, and the disaster, which men had foreseen from afar, appeared ever nearer its accomplishment. Already the first irruption of the Cimbri and Teutones, when not merely an army for the sake of booty, or to plant a military colony, but a whole tribe with wives and children had migrated into the Roman territory, threw Rome into consternation during the civil wars, when she was at the very height of her military prowess. Cæsar had spared no exertion to reduce Gaul to complete subjection, and this country had ever since adopted more and more the language and customs of Rome. He experienced from no people such vigorous resistance as from the Germanic tribes ; and to protect against these nations the safety of the empire, by strongly fortifying the banks of the Rhine and Danube, constituted afterwards the first concern of the Roman emperors. What a shock Augustus received from the defeat of Varus, by the German Arminius in his native woods ! Even under the martial Trajan, who was almost the last conqueror in the line of Roman emperors, men began to entertain serious apprehensions of the invasion of the Germanic tribes. The first great irruption was that of the Alemanni, who, under Marcus Aurelius burst into the Rhætian provinces, while similar movements occurred in Noricum and eastward towards Pannonia. However, Marcus Aurelius, by an energetic and successful resistance, repelled this first attempt, and thus was the means of deterring the barbarians for a long time from similar enterprises ; and a hundred years elapsed before Aurelian drove them again from Italy, over the Alps as far as the Lech. Among the German nations, the Goths, who from the Scandinavian isles had penetrated far into the interior of Germany, particularly towards the eastern, as afterwards towards the western, parts of that country, were pre-eminent in power. They could not be prevented from obtaining a firm footing in the north-

eastern provinces, by the Black Sea. The Emperor Decius perished in the war against this people ; and the Romans were obliged to surrender to them, by a formal treaty, the further Dacia. Constantine, indeed, was victorious in the war he waged against them; but he preferred to conclude an advantageous peace, to gain their friendship, and enlist their youth in the service of the Roman armies. Of the later reigns that of Diocletian displayed the greatest energy ; but this cruel persecution of the Christians was, even to judge from the mere external state of society, as little adapted to the spirit of the age as it was reprehensible in itself, and hence his design remained unaccomplished. Although, after his abdication, Diocletian showed himself a thorough Roman in private life, yet, while he swayed the sceptre, he deemed it expedient to surround the throne with all the pomp and forms of Asiatic homage. The division of the empire among several sovereigns appeared then, as afterwards, under Constantine and his successors, an unavoidable and necessary evil ; or, in other words, the several parts and members of the vast body of the Roman Empire, which approached nearer and nearer to its dissolution, began to fall to pieces, and that division itself accelerated again the destruction of the state, as it became the occasion of internal discord, and universal convulsion in the Roman world. The revolution accomplished by Constantine, indeed, might have become a real, and by far the most comprehensive regeneration of the Roman state, as it substituted for its originally defective and now completely rotten foundation of paganism, a new principle of life, a higher and more potent energy of divine truth and eternal justice. But Christianity had not yet near become the universal religion of the people, and empire of Rome—otherwise the great re-action, which took place under Julian, had not been possible. The peasantry in particular, continued for a long time yet attached to the old idolatry ; and hence the name of pagans was derived.\* Even Constantine, though he publicly declared himself a convert to Christianity, still did not dare to receive baptism immediately, and thus enter fully into the great community of Christians. The administration of the Roman state was so completely interwoven with pagan rites and pagan doctrines, that, from an

\* From the Latin word *Pagus*, a rural district.

act of this public nature, dangerous collisions might have at first easily ensued. On the whole, the old Roman maxims and principles of state-policy continued to prevail, even for a long time after the reign of Constantine; and the period had not yet arrived when Christianity was to work a fundamental reform throughout the whole political world,—and a Christian government, if I may so speak, was to be established and organised on that eternal basis, and to strike deep root and grow into the faith and life of the people, and into their habits and their feelings; but this great revolution was reserved for another and a later period.

END OF LECTURE X.



## LECTURE XI.

O the Ancient Germans, and of the Invasion of the Northern Tribes—  
The March of Nature in the Historical Development of Nations—  
Further Diffusion and Internal Consolidation of Christianity—Great  
Corruption of the World—Rise of Mahometanism.

THE idolatry of the ancient Germans, like the less poetical, less artificial, and less elaborate paganism of all primitive nations, consisted in a simple adoration of nature, such as existed among the Persians, with whom they had a very close affinity in race and in language. Thus the objects of their worship were the stars, the sun, and the moon, the celestial spirits, the various powers and elements of nature, and in particular the mother earth, under the name of the goddess Hertha. In the German and English names for the days of the week, the names of the gods, Thun, Wodan, Thor, and Freya, are still preserved; and these in the Germanic mythology correspond to the planets, most clearly visible from our globe—Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus; as it is also from these the Romanic languages have taken the names of the week days. It does not appear, indeed, that there existed in Germany quite so powerful, influential, and well-organised a body of priests, as the Druids composed in Gaul; and we can only discover the existence of certain secret rites and mysteries of a very primitive simplicity; as, for instance, the human sacrifice which was offered to the lake Hertha, in the Isle of Rugen, when a young man and maiden were thrown into its solitary waters. It was in the obscurity of woods, under the sacred oak, or by the Linden, the tree of northern enchantment, and on the mountain tops, they celebrated their rites, festivals, and entertainments, or arranged the Runic sticks to search into futurity; and as, among the Greeks, the Delphic oracle in moments of general danger was consulted, and gave its advice on the most important concerns of the nation; so the prophetesses and sybils of the north, like

the Velleda mentioned by the Romans, exerted a very decisive influence on the public councils. Old poetical traditions of gods, heroes, giants, and spirits (in many respects like those of Persia), formed the key-stone of the sacred recollections and national existence of the Germanic nations.

Their original descent from Asia remained ever strong and lively in their remembrance, and allusions to it were interwoven into the whole body of their traditionary poetry ; and as in the Persian traditions, the Aarii are celebrated as the most generous and heroic nation of the primitive ages, so the Asae occupy the most distinguished place in the northern mythology. In the Scandinavian north, which remained pagan for many centuries after Germany had become Christian, there are still extant many monuments and songs of a similar purport and strain ; and of these, indeed, abundant vestiges are to be found everywhere. Those old historical traditions and this hereditary poetry had often a very powerful influence on real life, and on the martial enterprises and achievements of the tribes ; and as in the heroic ages of the Greeks, according to the Homeric description, so in those times the bard, proclaiming the history of gods and heroes, and attending on the person of the prince or general of the army, was by no means an unimportant personage.

A monarchy of such wide extent as the ancient kingdom of Persia, did not exist in Germany. The constitution, if we can apply such a term to the wild freedom of those early ages, was more like that of Greece in the heroic times, when she was governed by her noble families, and her territory was divided into a number of petty kingdoms, which only rarely united in a great league for a common enterprise. This primitive Germanic constitution was a very simple and free aristocracy of nature. The tribe that composed the nation was an union or confederacy of freemen and nobles under an hereditary tribe-prince, or chosen leader ; and it was only at a later period that among some of the Germanic nations, this confederacy gave way to a regular regal government. Every freeman, and every man having a right to bear arms, was a member of the *Hermannia*, which was afterwards called the *arriere-ban* ; and it was this ancient *Hermannia* that gave rise to the Roman name for Germany. The land was cultivated by bondsmen and slaves, who had been either purchased, or taken prisoners in war, or were

the conquered remnant of the ancient inhabitants of the country, or even men who for some crime had forfeited their freedom and nobility. When the Romans became better acquainted with the Germanic nations, the latter had partly become an agricultural people; and they observed that very primitive custom of letting their fields lie alternately in fallow—a custom which has been so long retained in the north of Germany, under the name of *dreyfelder-wirthschaft*. Private property in land itself was not yet marked out nor enclosed within any exact limits—there was still much common land, and this was naturally an inducement for the different tribes, whenever they had a favourable opportunity, to change their abode and migrate. But this infant agriculture was still held subordinate to the occupations of the chase and of the pastoral life, which furnished the principal means of subsistence. The different forests that still exist in Germany are merely the remaining fragments of the one, vast, boundless Hercynian forest, that once extended through the whole interior of the country. From the quantity of wood that yet remained, the soil of Germany was much more marshy, and its atmosphere incomparably colder, than at the present day. The buffalo and the elk, which at present are so very rarely to be met with in Germany, were then animals indigenous to our country.

That this condition of the soil, and this unsettled mode of life, in a growing population are circumstances quite sufficient to account for a partial, though (without other co-operating causes) not perhaps for the general emigration of a whole tribe, must be evident to every person. Internal factions and wars are quite adequate causes for the emigration of a whole tribe, or, at least, of a considerable portion. In the early ages it was customary, when the population became too numerous, for the younger brothers, or a certain number of youths chosen by lot, to quit their country under the guidance of a leader of their choice, or of one marked out by fame, and, proceeding on an expedition of adventure, conquer other homes for themselves, and seek out their fortunes towards the east, or towards the west, or beneath the fairer sky of a southern region. Even in a more advanced, nay, in the most advanced, stage of civilisation, every state and nation is necessitated by nature, if I may so speak, to disburden itself of a redundant population, and to extend itself in new settlements



—in one word, to found colonies, and to possess colonies. This is the standing law—the fundamental rule of health in the progressive development of nations ; and where this necessity does not exist in an equal degree, we must consider it only a case of exception, and we shall be sure to find out that some special cause precludes the operation of this principle for a time: for, sooner or later, nature will force us to this expedient. The commercial colonies of the Phœnicians and Greeks were in part founded, and certainly at least defended, extended, and consolidated, by force of arms ; and it is only by similar means, that in modern times, Mexico and Peru have become colonies of Spain.

But in those early ages, and among those northern, warlike children of nature, this natural necessity of emigration could take no other course, nor have any other object but a military settlement. Such was the result of the first irruption of the northern nations, mentioned in history—the expedition of the Gauls into Thrace, which was soon succeeded by a second of a similar kind under Brennus; when that Gallic general marched at the head of his troops into Macedon and Greece, and became master of the rich temple of Apollo at Delphi, and of all its accumulated treasures. A remnant of these troops finally fixed their abode in Asia Minor, and established a Gallic settlement in a province which from them received the name of *Galatia*. In this first great expedition, or irruption of the northern nations, the names of almost all the tribes and their leaders are Celtic ; still some few German names are found amongst them ; and this may be easily accounted for, when we recollect that the Gauls, who were then widely spread, and inhabited even the north of Italy, were undoubtedly in possession of most of the Alpine countries, and thus may easily have engaged in their service some German tribes. Who knows but what some marvellous tradition, and fabulous account of the lovely climate and delicious fruits of the southern regions, together with recollections of their original descent from the southern nations of Asia, may have contributed to bring the Cimbri and the Teutones from the islands of Scandinavia to the plains of Italy? Had the Romans not dreaded the dangerous precedent, and had they but allotted lands to these nations, they might easily have kept terms of peace with them, and enlisted their most valiant youth in

the service of their legions ; as, indeed, under the later emperors, the flower of their troops was selected from the Gothic tribes.

But the case was widely different when the relations of peace and war, the proximity of frontiers, and the occupation of the German territory, brought the Romans in closer contact with the Germanic nations ; as, for instance, in the campaigns which Cæsar conducted against the chief of the Suevi, Ariovistus ; Tiberius against Maroboduus, king of the Marcomanni ; and the general of Augustus against the Saxon prince, Hermann. Here both parties diligently studied and observed each other's excellences and defects, and mixed in the most various intercourse. Thus Hermann's father lived among the Romans ; his brother bore a Roman name ; and his nephew was educated at Rome. Maroboduus himself repaired thither, desirous, like a prudent foe, to examine with his own eyes the capital of Roman greatness and power. Among the German tribes and their leaders, factions were sometimes formed even against Hermann and Maroboduus ; and, at a later period, these divisions had no inconsiderable influence on the relations of the Germanic nations with the Romans, and on their foreign enterprises. The Roman frontier on the banks of the Rhine and the Danube, fortified by a long line of castles, fortresses, and cities, lay for the most part within the German territory, and was inhabited by some German tribes, or German settlers that had been attracted thither. Here the nations of Germany saw their brethren of a kindred race, living, indeed, under the control of Roman laws, which those who still retained their freedom, sought to repel by force of arms ; but on the other hand, they observed the high cultivation of a country, blessed with all the advantages of civilisation, and adorned with so many of the arts of life, with the culture of the vine, and a variety of the most exquisite fruits. And when in the course of the almost incessant wars waged on the frontier, they either encountered a feeble resistance, or observed some defect in the mode of Roman defence, the desire to prosecute their fortune, and penetrate into those beautiful countries, must have considerably augmented. As, three centuries ago, the fabulous account of treasures of gold, and rich ores of silver, to be found in America, drew hosts of Spanish and other European adventurers over the Atlantic to the shores of the newly-discovered conti-

ment; so the charms of a southern sky, the rich fruits, the vineyards, the blooming gardens of a warm, lovely, and highly-cultivated region, wrought powerfully on the imaginations of the northerns, and were often the motive of their expeditions and armed migrations.

The first irruptions of the Alemanni in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and subsequent to it, appear to have arisen immediately and naturally, (as I have said,) out of the perpetual wars waged on the frontier, on the first advantage which those barbarians obtained over the Romans, and on the first defect or weakness which they espied in the defensive operations of their enemies. That the warfare on the frontier was perpetuated almost without intermission, it is the more natural to suppose, since the Germanic nations, by two armed confederacies of their tribes, had on their side opposed to the fortifications of the Roman boundaries a living frontier-wall. The name of the Marcomanni served to designate not a particular tribe, but an armed confederation for the defence of the whole nation; and the same remark holds good of the Alemanni. In the descriptions which the Romans have given of Germany, they were occasionally led, by their ignorance of the language, to mistake a league for a people, and to apply to a tribe the denomination intended to denote a district or a custom. But in these accounts it is very easy to trace the three or four leading nations of Germany, that figure afterwards in its history, and which, on the dissolution of the Roman empire, possessed themselves of its provinces, spread through the different Romanic countries, and in the course of time became the founders of the modern European states.

These three principal nations of Germany (and such they were considered by the Romans,) were the Suevi, the Saxons, and the Goths, who may be best distinguished by the course of the rivers, which flowed through the countries they inhabited. The whole of that extensive country, afterwards called Ancient Saxony, and which lay along the course and embouchures of the Elbe, the Eyder, the Ems, and the Weser, including the whole sea-coast with Jutland and Denmark, all the Rhenish Netherlands with the Batavian shores, was inhabited by the Saxons; a people (for it was only later their name was explained from a peculiar national weapon, or species of sword,) attached to the soil, and who were of all the Germanic tribes the least



prone to emigration; for, as mariners, they kept to the sea-coasts, and the banks of rivers. It was only at the period when the tide of emigration had reached its highest point that the Saxons, issuing from their native seat, not only possessed themselves of, but as it were, peopled anew, the great British isle; and it is very possible that this not widely-dispersed, but closely-connected low-German race, then out-numbered all the other nations of Germany. It was on the banks of the Upper Rhine and the Upper Danube that lay the original seat of the Suevi, a race perhaps more mixed, who occur in history under the name of the Alemanni, and were distinguished for a restless spirit of adventure and migratory enterprise. The name of the Franks, a people occupying so important a place in later history, denoted originally rather a league than a particular nation; and as their geographical seat lay between those of the Suevi and the Saxons, they were akin in character and descent to both those nations. In their manners and mode of government they resembled the Alemanni; while in race and language they were originally more nearly allied to the Saxons. If the Franks are to be considered a distinct nation, it is the ancient Catti or Hessians (who have ever been included among that people) that we must regard as the main stock of the whole race.

But the second great primitive and leading race among the Germanic nations were the Goths, a people whose territory spread from the Scandinavian peninsula, and the shores of the Baltic, along the whole course of the Vistula, as far as the Black Sea. Their language, as it exists in the yet extant Gothic Bible of Ulphilas, is what we would now call the high Dutch dialect; though its form is more ancient, and is distinguished for a certain purity of structure, not without its peculiar charm. This Gothic dialect is, in tone and form, less akin to the Saxon and Scandinavian languages, except in so far as the branches of a stem, the nearer we approach the roots, reveal more clearly their common origin. In the Scandinavian north, the territories of these two principal Germanic races, the Goths and the Saxons, were contiguous; and, proceeding from this common source, the two nations branched out into separate and various streams. Of a similar, or at least of a kindred, race to the Goths, were the Burgundians and Vandals, who afterwards founded the kingdoms of that name in Gaul and Spain. Hereditary monarchy attained to a more settled form among

the Goths than among any other of the Germanic nations; and, divided between two different dynasties, the Ostro-Goths were subject to the heroic family of the Amali, and the Visi-Goths to that of the Balti. The Roman historians of that age often speak of their martial courage and magnanimity, as well as of their lofty and commanding stature.

The real emigration of the northern tribes originated solely and immediately with the Goths; and, in the first period, was not produced by any commotion among the Asiatic nations, as was afterwards the case. As early as the third century, the Goths took possession of the countries situated on the northern coast of the Euxine, and penetrated into Greece as far as Athens. The Emperor Decius fell in the war against them, and in the peace which they concluded with Aurelian, they retained the further Dacia which had been previously surrendered. They now became allies of the Romans, who were happy enough to cultivate the relations of peace with them, and to recruit their legions with the Gothic youth. A hundred years later, the Goths, on the death of their king Hermanric, were disturbed in their settlements near the Black Sea by the Huns; a people who, according to the Chinese annals, originally inhabited the northern frontier of China towards the eastern parts of the Middle Asia, and who afterwards, bearing down westward, took up their abode for a long time on the eastern shores of the Caspian, till at last they forced their way into the Caucasian regions, and the territory of the Goths on the borders of the Black Sea.

It was only now, when the minds of the German tribes of the west were at the same time rising to a higher and higher pitch of excitement, and the old empire of Rome was on every side crumbling into ruins, that the tide of northern emigration burst out in all its full and fearful violence. In the first irruptions, the names of the different tribes, as well as of their leaders, were almost all without exception German; but now we meet with many foreign names, which discover not only the Asiatic Huns, but the Sclavonian, and even perhaps, occasionally, the Finnish tribes, that were undoubtedly then intermingled with the Goths in the vast empire of the latter. For fifty years after the first invasion, the Huns remained at peace in their new settlements between the Theiss and the Danube, nor did they disturb the Roman empire till the time of Attila.

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The Goths offered to defend the frontier against these barbarians, and received in return the province to the south of the Danube.

The Goths readily embraced Christianity; but they received it in the Arian form; for at the time when religious instructors and the Gothic bishop Ulphilas were sent from Constantinople, the Arian party had the ascendancy in that capital. This circumstance had afterwards the most fatal influence on the destinies of the Roman empire; for one of the chief causes of its downfall was this new contest in religious matters. It was on this very account the second conquest of Rome by the Vandal King Genseric was attended with far more devastation than the first under the Visi-Goth King Alaric; for the former persecuted the Catholic church with all the animosity of an Arian. The Goths were not animated by feelings of hostility towards the Romans; but were rather disposed to admire the excellence and superiority of their civilisation. When the Emperor Valens perished in the Gothic war, which Roman treachery had occasioned, Theodosius contrived to conclude an advantageous peace with this people, when they stood at the very gates of Constantinople, took forty thousand of their troops into his pay, and renewed the armed confederacy of the Goths which Constantine had formed. When the Gothic prince Athanaric had contemplated with astonishment the pomp and splendour of Constantinople, and had conceived sentiments of respect for the personal character of Theodosius; the Goths, moved by the representations of their prince, declared to Theodosius that as long as he lived, they wished to have no other king but himself. But the case was altered under the sons of Theodosius; and, to defend themselves from this people, these princes knew no other expedient than to let loose on Italy these barbarians, and to divert and point the storm of invasion towards that quarter. This policy produced the expedition of the Visi-Goth King Alaric to Rome, and the first conquest of the eternal and seven-hilled city.

The disputes between Rome and the new Byzantine court did not a little contribute to the downfall of the Roman empire; and the dexterity, or rather craftiness, which the politicians of Constantinople displayed on this, as on many other occasions, was often attended with consequences the most ruinous to Italy. As the universal empire of Rome had grown out of



civil war, so it was undermined and ruined more by internal discord and corruption, than by the power of the Goths; a nation with whom the Romans might easily have contracted relations of amity, and induced to fraternize, and become by degrees one people with themselves; and indeed, at various periods, the policy of the better emperors had prepared the way for such an union. As, of all the Germanic nations, the Goths were the most powerful; and as their assistance would have enabled the Romans to resist all the other tribes; such an alliance, as I here speak of, would have accomplished by pacific means the purpose of the great northern migration, namely, the union of the sound, vigorous, native spirit of the Germans with the civilisation of the Romans (then, indeed, sunk to the lowest state of debasement), and whose polity and public life Christianity itself was unable totally to regenerate. And thus a long intermediate period of conflict and confusion would have been rendered unnecessary.

During the troubles which followed the first conquest of Rome by Alaric, the Romans invoked from Africa the aid of Genseric, King of the Vandals—a prince who, both as a warrior and as a ruler, was far more cruel than Alaric, and who everywhere spread terror on his march. Jealous and suspicious of the Goths, he invited into Italy Attila, with all the nations which his martial prowess had subjected or attached to his authority, and occasioned the expedition of the latter into the west, where, in the great battle on the banks of the Marna, the Goths constituted the main portion of both the contending armies. The Huns and some other of the invading nations were still pagans; and the history of that age amply demonstrated that wars are ever more destructive in proportion as the armies are more numerous, the throng of armed multitudes more dense, and the nations composing them more various and dissimilar. Still the general oppression, anarchy, desolation, and misery in those times, are not to be traced solely to wars and battles; for during the most flourishing and civilised ages of ancient Rome, wars were almost perpetually waged, and were generally more, and certainly not less, bloody and destructive than the present. The Bishop of Rome contrived to avert the torrent of hostilities from his capital, and the city was spared. On the death of Attila, the Huns ceased to be formidable; for the power of that prince, which depended far less

on their numbers, than on his own military prowess and glory, perished at once with him.

Odoacer, Prince of the Heruli and Rugians (nations also Gothic), was called to the empire of Rome from the banks of the Danube. From his conquest dates the downfall of the Western Empire, and the last Roman youth who was yet dignified with the name of emperor, was called Romulus, 1228 years after the first Romulus—the founder of the eternal city—a city which, after it had lost its outward and political power, became the centre of a vast sacerdotal dominion, and again occupied in succeeding times a mighty and important place in history. When the sway of the Heruli became an object of detestation in Rome and Italy, the Greek emperor, Zeno, in a formal document, conferred on the Ostro-Goth king, Theodoric, who had been educated at Constantinople, the dominion of Italy; and the latter, after his victory over Odoacer, assumed the Roman purple, in lieu of the Gothic dress. He was highly esteemed in Rome, and by all the Germanic nations; his name, like that of Charlemagne after him, was celebrated in the heroic songs of the Germans, while political writers and historical critics commend alike his talents and his virtues. His rule was generous and noble, he loved and honoured the arts and sciences which his age still possessed, and the last of Roman writers, Cassiodorus and Boethius, were the ornaments of his reign. Factions which arose on the death of this great prince, and a crime perpetrated on the relics of his house,\* afforded the active emperor of the east, Justinian, an opportunity to re-establish the Greek sway in Italy, by means of his successful general, Belisarius. Military commanders like Belisarius, and some worthier and more enterprising princes on the throne of Byzantium, as well as that systematic course of policy I have before described, maintained the Byzantine empire; while Rome itself was ruined, and Italy fell under the dominion of the Lombards, who succeeded the Goths, and were succeeded in their turn by the Franks—under whom the Roman empire of Germany was re-established, and Rome became, and continued, united with that empire during the middle ages, though for the most part only in name.

This rapid but faithful sketch of the migration of the

\* Schlegel alludes to the murder of Amalasontha, daughter of Theodoric, and to the usurpation of Theodatus.—*Trans.*

northern nations, seemed necessary to enable us to form a right opinion on this subject. For this period, which laid the mighty foundation on which the whole Teutonico-Romanic structure of the institutions, laws, manners, languages, opinions, and even the peculiar imaginative character of modern European nations has been raised, has not always been fully understood, or justly appreciated by many writers, either led away by a partial enthusiasm for the antique, or enthralled by modern opinions and prejudices—writers who wish to trace in all parts of creation, and even in universal history, the same dead uniformity and monotony of plan. It is by no means common to meet with an historical inquirer, possessing a flexibility of fancy, a justness of feeling, and a soundness and correctness of judgment, capable of transporting him into the remote ages of history, and the mythic antiquity of nations. But in the present instance, and throughout the whole of this chaotic epoch, when the old fictions of the Titanic wars appear to be actually realised, and when the marvellous of events and sentiments is to be found in the obscure and meagre chronicles of that age, which often unite fragments of popular mythology and pagan tradition, with real historic incidents; it is perhaps still more difficult to form an accurate judgment, and to discriminate between the elements of truth and falsehood. As we cannot figure to ourselves such a state of anarchy, we are unable to comprehend it. We should bear in mind how often in nature the fairest bloom of vegetation, and the richest fulness of organic life, spring out of a state of confusion and chaos, when the elemental powers, after a long strife and conflict, settle at last into a state of harmonious equipoise, unite and fructify, and in some creative moment, when the struggle of labour is over, give birth to new and more beautiful forms of existence. Ancient Egypt was indebted for its fertility to the periodic inundations of the Nile, which, had they not been provided against by mounds and dams, would have occasioned the utmost desolation. Nay, doth not this earth we inhabit, and which nourishes us, with all that fair and blooming vegetation spread over its surface, with all that boundless wealth and variety of animal life, and with all the civilisation and refinement of man's existence, whose abode it constitutes; doth not this earth, I say, teeming as it doth with fertility and life, rest on the gigantic remains of a primitive world, submerged by the old



floods, and which was often torn, convulsed, and rent asunder by the eruptions of subterraneous fire? Well, the migration of the northern nations brought about a sort of chaotic struggle between the various elements of society—it was a new Ogygean inundation of nations in the historical ages—but it laid the fruitful soil—the historical foundation of a new moral and intellectual form of life. This vast flux and reflux of nations, rolling in incessant waves from the east to the west, and from the north to the south, and back again to the east and to the north, this emission of immense armies issuing in all directions from a common centre, and returning again to that centre from every side—all this vast movement must be looked upon as a strife and contention between the elemental powers of human society. The first effect, indeed, of such a strife of nature's elements let loose, is to destroy, or at least, to impair, all existing organic forms; and it must be confessed, this wild and protracted state of confusion and anarchy does not present the most pleasing and auspicious aspect to the eye of the historical observer. With respect to the latter circumstance, we must recollect that the extremely slow progress, and often unexpected delays, in the advancement of human society, correspond not always, and indeed rarely, to our wishes and expectations; while, on the other hand, there are epochs in history, when we are amazed by the sudden out-burst of the most extraordinary events, and when a great splendour of moral and intellectual life surprises us of a sudden, like a bright morning in spring. In other words, there is a strong, wise, and fatherly hand which guides and conducts the destinies of individuals, as well as the march of society, and the course of ages; or, as the Scripture with touching simplicity saith, “the Father hath reserved times unto himself;” and time in his march keepeth not pace with the rapidity of our desires, nor moveth according to our views and hopes. But whatever may be, if I may so speak, the fearful tardiness wherewith the views of Providence over the destinies of the human race are accomplished;—a tardiness whereof man has to bear the greatest blame; or whatever may be, if I may so say, the long delays of divine justice—the procrastination of the period of grace;—it cannot be doubted that the general result of the great northern migration was most salutary, and that that mixture of Germanic tribes with the degenerate population of Rome—that

alliance between the healthy, vigorous, and native intellectual energy of Germany, and the rapidly decaying civilisation of Rome, were productive of the mightiest and most beneficial consequences. Whoever doubts the truth of this observation, may cure his scepticism by comparing the splendour, activity, and variety in the political and intellectual existence of the modern European states, that have sprung out of this union of the Germanic and Romanic nations, with the dull monotony, the thorough moral and intellectual stupor which prevailed in the later Byzantine empire.

But I have more than once observed that, independently of that progressive power of reason, inherent in all the forms and departments of human activity ; and independently of the operations of Divine Providence, which form that high mysterious chain of unity which links together the different periods of man's social progress ; independently, I say, of all these, there is a law of nature—a high, and secret principle of nature, presiding over the life and growth of human society—which, if kept in due subordination to the higher principle of Providence, will not be found incompatible with it. The prevalence of this law of nature may be clearly traced in the history of mankind, and even in that of particular nations, when their social progress is not impeded or interrupted by violent or irregular causes. And in following the current of events in history, the historical observer can accurately distinguish the different periods of national development—the first period of artless, yet marvellous, childhood—the next of the first bloom and flush of youth—later, the maturer vigour and activity of manhood—and at last the symptoms of approaching age, a state of general decay, and second childishness. This energy of nature, which, together with the other higher and divine principle of human destiny, is inherent in mankind, displays itself even in the sphere of intellect, and particularly in the flourishing eras of art and science. It is even still more, or at least quite as, perceptible in those creative moments already described, of a new, though perhaps, at first, a chaotic epoch of human society ; so far, at least, as those plastic, eventful moments are not the mere offspring and counterfeit production of revolutionary violence—but have issued from the very well-spring of nature. When the latter is the case, it will be found that the whole tendency of these periods of extraordinary ferment in society is conducive to the

extension of the divine principle, and to the promotion of the views of Providence, as was eminently the case in the era of the great northern migrations; an era, when a catastrophe, at first the most appalling, led to the further triumph of Christianity, which conferred on those robust, northern children of nature, the high consecration of an empire, which thereby, in its ulterior progress, far outshone the Roman, or any other old pagan dominion. But unquestionably the two conflicting elements in that eventful period, which contained the first germs of all modern civilisation—the free-born energy of Germanic nature, and the Romanic refinement, science, and language, were happily blended and harmonised by the Christian religion only, which on that account must be regarded as the all-connecting bond—the one all-animating principle of social life in modern ages. But without that new element of vital power furnished by the northern emigrations, Christianity alone would not have regenerated the degraded people of Rome, nor have restored its intellectual energy, then sunk to too low a state of debasement. Above all, the primitive, innate, and deeply-rooted corruption of the Roman government was beyond the power of remedy, and could only be removed by time. The evils of the age were, indeed, universal; for, even in the bosom of Christianity, discord had broken out; and where even faith was preserved in its purity, there, to use the expression of Holy Writ, “much of first love was gone.” But for this, the influence of Christianity on the Roman empire, and the Roman world, would have been far more extensive; and a miraculous cure would have been wrought on the moral distempers of society, as on the physical diseases of individuals. And as holy hermits were often able to command the elements of nature and the savage beasts of the desert; so a divine power, by its mild, conciliating, prompt, and effective influence would, in the first moment have allayed the wild jar and strife of the social elements. But these effects were accomplished only by slow degrees, by the soothing influence of time, and by the gradual infusion of the spirit of Christianity into the human mind.

The progressive corruption and ever-growing disorders of the Roman world were productive of consequences in some degree important to Christianity, particularly in relation to after-ages. To forsake and renounce that world of cruelty and vice, that



kingdom of dissimulation, that age of confusion and barbarism, and to seek by preference an abode and asylum in the wilderness, in the neighbourhood of lions and other savage animals of the desert, required no extraordinary impulse of Christian feeling, and scarcely more than a high effort of human courage. And thus in that convulsed period of the Roman empire, and under the accursed domination of its last tyrants, Christian anchorets peopled the solitudes of Thebais,—those solitudes where the old pyramids and other monuments of hoar antiquity still speak in mute signs to the traveller, their grave and earnest language. Self-contemplation did not shut up these Christian anchorites within a narrow and egotistical sphere of thought, as is the case with the Indian recluse, who, to outward appearance, leads the same mode of life. As the primitive Christians evinced the power of faith and charity by deeds and in sufferings, in words and in works of manifold kinds; so prayer was to these solitaries the inward porch of a new and invisible world—a real business of life, and a bond of the closest and tenderest connexion, whereby, though separated from the world, they remained, even at the remotest distance, intimately united with all who, like themselves, were firmly united to God.

Thus it was that the primitive Christians displayed the power of divine Hope, and ardent Charity, not only in their heroic constancy under assaults, persecutions, sufferings and torments of all, even the most exquisite, kinds; but in their renunciation of society and of all earthly enjoyments, in their contempt and abandonment of a world, which seemed in truth eternally distracted and irretrievably undone. In the eremitical life, a simple handicraft was ordinarily coupled with the duty of spiritual contemplation. These first Christian anchorites of Egypt were the original and model of all later monastic institutes; although, conformably to the living and quite practical spirit of Christianity, these institutes have generally admitted into their rules other useful and salutary exercises adapted either to the general circumstances of the age, or to the wants of individuals—such as the education of youth—the cultivation of the sciences—the relief of the poor—the care of the infirm—and the practice of other works of charity. The anchorites, who lead a purely contemplative life, constitute a comparatively small and rare exception in the Christian church; and they are

tolerated only because the ways of human nature are so infinitely diversified, and often so strange and so singular.

To resist their internal foes, to withstand the assaults of the fiend—the spirit of discord and corruption, and to preserve inviolate the purity of morals, as well as of faith, the primitive Christians as much needed the divine assistance, as to enable them to endure outwardly the torments of martyrdom, or to renounce in holy solitude the pleasures of the world. In this respect three different kinds of heresy, which were so many trials the Christian religion had to sustain, are well worthy of our attention. From the very birth of Christianity, the Gnostics gave loose to the ardour of an Oriental fancy, indulged in a variety of Theosophistic speculations, and with their systems of Divine Emanations, Eradiations, Incarnations, and Persons, formed an almost mythological concatenation of ideas; so that had it been possible for this sect to become predominant, and for Christianity to swerve into such a labyrinth of doctrines, our divine religion would have degenerated into a system of metaphysical fictions, not unlike the philosophic mythology and poetical creed of India. Happily these sects of Gnostics were not numerous, nor in general of long duration; and they were extremely divided among themselves; for a truly inventive fancy ever strikes out a path of inquiry for itself. But, when considered in an intellectual point of view, these sectaries, amid all their strange and whimsical errors, must ever command the attention of mankind. It would seem from all appearance, (and indeed the nature of things would sufficiently warrant the inference) that many of these sects combined with their own peculiar notions the opinions of other Oriental sects, totally alien from Christianity. As the march of error is infinitely progressive, and as, from its very nature, false opinion is sure to branch out into a variety of ramifications, it is often difficult to determine with exactness whether some of these Gnostic sects, that spread through Central Asia, and were lost in a multitude of others, were or not of a Christian origin. Of all the sects belonging to the Gnostic family, the Manichæans alone appear to have had a longer existence; and during the middle ages, they secretly germinated in Europe.

The second corruption of Christianity was from Arianism, which corresponds to what in modern times is termed Rationalism; though the former appeared in another and more Christian

form. That the dispute with Arianism was no mere verbal dispute—that it involved a capital article of faith—a question of life or death for Christianity—a question whether the real Foundation—the essential Corner-stone—and Beginning of our faith were really, truly, and in very deed divine, and from God, and equal with God, or merely in a certain sense like to God—(an opinion which the Platonic, or any other system of philosophy might have included among his tenets)—that the dispute with Arianism was no mere verbal dispute, must be evident to every upright, ingenuous, and unprejudiced mind. No sect has ever been so widely diffused, nor has ever taken such deep root; and, by the arts and evasions of a prodigious subtilty, it maintained its principles under the mask of apparent submission. It was now that for the first time, the importance and power of a general council became apparent, in order to oppose to the many-shaped, subtle, and intangible spirit of error, a brief, but clear, and definite formulary of that faith which animated the bosom, and was rooted in the conviction of every Christian. This destructive rationalism of the early ages of Christianity was at last repressed, and became finally extinct; though the last ramifications of this sect have continued down to our times among the Eutychians of Armenia, and the Nestorians of Ethiopia.

How much the unhappy disputes of Arianism contributed in this period of general decline, towards the downfall of the Roman empire, I have already had occasion to notice. But that passion for dispute, which, if not innate in man, has at least become his second nature, and is, as it were, the original sin of human intellect, displays itself in a more striking degree in certain sects, that did not question any article of faith, but merely some subordinate matters of opinion, or the rights of ecclesiastical authority, and who conducted their disputes with the most unyielding obstinacy—such a passion, I say, displays itself more strikingly in these sects than in others, that called in question points of faith, and who, so far as they were conscientious in their errors, appear entitled to our respect and forbearance. Among the former class of disputants must be ranked some of the smaller, less diffused, and obscurer sects of the first ages of the church, like the Montanists and Donatists; sects whose influence was on that account by no means unimportant, and who occupy no insignificant place in the history of



their times ; for their errors constitute the third form of deviation from universal Christianity. In the same category must we place the great schism of a later period, which severed the Greek from the Western church ; for this unhappy separation, as is well known, had no relation to any important dogma of Christianity.

As the general councils of that period prove the self-preserving and self-sustaining power of Christianity, so the energy of Christian faith and Christian intellect displays its life, activity, and scientific progress in the numberless and manifold productions of those first doctors of the church, so highly revered by all succeeding ages. The style and language of these works must be estimated by the standard of their age ; and it would be absurd to expect them to possess, in a like degree, the attic simplicity of a *Xenophon*, or the full and elaborate periods of a *Livy*. But with this single exception, these writings display the most varied talents for oratory, and philosophy, united with extensive learning, the purest feelings of religious love, and the most correct views in religion. And, to cite but one or two examples out of the multitude of ecclesiastical writers, *St. Augustine*, by the extent of his historical information, by a philosophy zealous in its inquiries after truth, but still irresolute, presents the image of a Christian *Cicero*, in a language somewhat altered indeed, but distinguished for a similar employment of rhetoric. Nor was this great man destitute of political discernment and penetration ; and he certainly possessed a much more decided talent for speculative inquiry, than the old Roman who flourished in the last age of the republic. There was next that learned and holy recluse *St. Jerome*, who was as well versed in classical literature as in the Oriental languages, and who was gifted with a depth of critical discernment, and an original power of thought and expression, equalled by very few orators and thinkers in any age.

The dread of a false *Gnosis* was at that period, as often in subsequent ages, an obstacle to the progress of a profound Christian philosophy. The leaning of the great ecclesiastical writer *Origen*, particularly in his youth, to some opinions of the *Gnostics*, excited long after his death many doubts and controversies respecting some points of his belief, and tended at least to impair the reverence with which his philosophical genius was

otherwise regarded. This was particularly the case when the Arians made use of some doubtful opinion of this great man for the support of their system; as indeed it often happens that an elevated system of philosophy is not completed in its parts, or at least that the individual errors it may contain are seized upon by the dull, innovating spirit of a superficial, and half-doubting faith, and debased to a quite alien and inferior sphere of speculation,

There is also another error, or rather illusion, which deserves to be noticed, as it is a characteristic incident in the history of those early ages of the church; for it was no regular system of error, nor did its partisans constitute a sect; but it was merely the exaggerated opinion of some individuals in the bosom of the church, who were animated by no intentions hostile to Christianity. I allude to the (so called) Millenarian doctrine, which, as it refers to the future historical destiny of Christianity, possesses a high historical interest. Though the Prophet of the New Testament marked out the period of a thousand years for the duration of the triumph of the church, he expressly intimated thereby that that period could not be discovered nor determined by human penetration, for, as the Scripture saith, "a thousand years are as one day with the Lord, and one day, as a thousand years;" and though the inspired writer expressly added, that as the great combat, which man is doomed to on the earth and in earthly life, can never be completely terminated, a last combat awaited humanity at the close of those thousand years; many virtuous and praiseworthy men were still found, who depicted this kingdom of a thousand years in the most sensual colours of earthly felicity, and thus destroyed all faith in that prophetic warning, so necessary for man and for all ages—all belief in the ideal conception of the kingdom of divine truth: or, with reckless precipitancy equally misapplied the words of the prophet, and (as has often been the case in succeeding times) very unseasonably alarmed themselves and others; though that long series of ages marked out by the apostle for the progress of Christianity might have opened their eyes, and taught them differently. But the principal cause which opposed, and must ever oppose an insurmountable difficulty to the Millenarian system of that and of all succeeding ages, is the limit assigned to the judgment of Christians in all that relates to the inscrutable decrees of Divine Providence; whether those

decrees regard individuals or mankind in general. Surely nothing could be conceived more disquieting, more fatal to human life, than for every individual to know before-hand with the utmost certainty from his birth the day and hour of his death ; and no greater calamity could happen to any man than a revelation of such a kind. The same remark is equally applicable to the world in general, where such fore-knowledge would only produce the utmost disorder and confusion. As in the case of a sick man reduced to imminent danger from the increasing symptoms of dissolution ; though no man, not even the physician, can positively know and determine with certainty the course of events, which is known to God alone, still every friend would wish that the patient should examine his interior, unite his thoughts to God, and set his house in order ; so cases may be imagined, when this comparison would apply to mankind at large.

Thus then on the Roman soil, and amid that world once so brilliant, Christianity had grown up, like a tender, luminous plant, whose seed had come down from Heaven. For the further expansion of that heavenly seed, for the formation of the Christian state, and the political organisation of Christian nations, we must allow that the all-wise and powerful Hand, which guides the destinies of men and of nations, the march of ages, and the course of events, found it necessary to employ at first very violent, and (if we may borrow a term of the medical art) almost *heroic* remedies. The cause of this undoubtedly must be sought for in the fact, that although many great and holy men are to be found in the first ages of the church, mankind on the whole had very imperfectly corresponded to that mighty and divine impulse which Christianity had imparted to the world ; and had very soon and very quickly fallen into the most fearful disputes. Scarce had that induration of the northern nations burst in upon the blooming garden of the Christian west, (and beneficial to mankind as have been the remote consequences and final results of that revolution, and defensible therefore as it may be in a historical Theodicea, still we cannot deny that its immediate effects were most terrible and destructive ;)—scarce, we say, had this inundation of the northern nations occurred when, in the opposite quarter of the east, there broke out among the nations of Asia, that mighty Arabian conflagration, whose flames were scattered over the terrified globe, by the sons of the



desert, guided by their new prophet of unbelief, and animated themselves with all the enthusiasm of destruction.

I am at a loss to conceive how some could have regarded it as a peculiar merit of this religion of empty arrogance and senseless pride, that it maintains and inculcates with purity a belief in one Almighty Deity. This, as the Scripture says, the demons themselves, in their realms of eternal darkness, believe, without being on that account at all the better; and it is only a profound ignorance of the world and himself, that could ever make man forget and obliterate from his bosom that first foundation of all faith. All the elements of salvation, reconciliation, mercy, love, and happiness for mankind, to be found in eternal truth, and a belief in that truth, all these are wanting in the religion of Mahomet. There is not a more decided contrast than that presented by the silent progress of the new and divine light of truth in the primitive church, amid oppression and persecution, in meek submission to every existing law, and, except in matters of faith, in a patient, unwearied, and cheerful submission to the hostile, but still legitimate, powers of the earth; and, on the other hand, that fanatic thirst of conquest inspired by Mahomet—that express precept to propagate by fire and sword, throughout the four quarters of the globe, the new *Unitarian* faith of Arabia. If some writers, instead of studying the history of modern Europe, in order to deduce from their researches new matter, and occasion for reviving the old contests about the respective rights and limits of the secular and ecclesiastical powers, would only examine with attention the history of the ancient Caliphate, they would soon satisfy themselves of the fearful character of that institution, of the infernal spirit that produced that anti-Christian combination of spiritual and temporal authority, and of the horrible state of moral degradation to which it has reduced mankind in every country where it has prevailed.

It was with the rapidity of a destructive fire that this mighty mischief spread over the countries of Asia, and a large portion of Africa, till it soon menaced the southern extremities of Europe. When Mahomet died, he was master of Arabia, a country that, from the earliest antiquity, had remained in a state of absolute seclusion from the rest of the world; and consequently, if this great revolution had remained confined within the limits of this region, the religion of Mahomet would never

have exerted so mighty an historical influence on other nations and kingdoms. But only a few score years from his decease, and under his immediate successors, the whole Western Asia between the Tigris and Euphrates, as far as the Mediterranean, Syria, and Palestine, down to Mount Taurus and the frontiers of Asia Minor, and soon again the whole northern coast of Africa, down to the opposite shores of Spain, were subdued by the disciples of the Koran; while at the same moment the Roman west and the empire of Persia were menaced by the arms of these formidable invaders. It was a general principle with the Mahometan conquerors to extirpate all recollection of antiquity in the countries which they subdued, to give them an entirely new form and aspect—or, in other words, to destroy and obliterate every vestige of the higher and better civilisation that had adorned those once flourishing regions.

END OF LECTURE XI.

## LECTURE XII.

Sketch of Mahomet and his Religion—Establishment of the Saracenic Empire—New Organisation of the European West, and Restoration of the Christian Empire.

FROM the earliest period, the pastoral tribes of Arabia have lived under their emirs, in all the wild independence of Nomade nations; they were not, however, without cities, as these were created and rendered necessary by the trade of the caravan, which in its journeys through the wilderness, and in its passage from one inhabited province to another, required these points of rest. A few of the frontier districts and maritime coasts were, indeed, possessed by some of the more ancient Egyptian Pharaohs; but the entire country was never subdued or conquered either by the Assyrians, the Persians, or the Macedonian conquerors. Nor were the Romans more successful; and it was only in the reign of Trajan, the last of Roman emperors, who meditated schemes of conquest, that a small frontier tract of Arabia Petræa was taken possession of, and annexed to the Roman empire. Immediately on the death of Trajan, the Roman government recurred to the pacific policy of Augustus, who had considered it dangerous to enlarge the empire by any new conquests: and in consequence, this province of Arabia was abandoned by the Romans, and left to the enjoyment of its ancient freedom.

This long-established liberty and total independence of all foreign conquerors and rulers has not a little contributed to exalt among the Arabs a strong self-consciousness. Their origin, which is very nearly akin to that of the Hebrews, they deduce as descendants of Yoktan from *Heber*, who was an ancestor of Abraham, or from Ishmael, the son of Abraham, that was born in the desert. Among these free and warlike pastoral nations, the feelings of clan-ship, the pride of noble descent, and the glory of an ancient and renowned race, and



again the mutual hostility of tribes transmitted from one generation to another, the never-to-be-cancelled debt of blood, form the ruling and animating principle, nay the almost exclusive purport of existence. This *tribe-spirit* of the Arabians has had a mighty influence on the origin and first development of the Mahometan religion, and has stamped on it a peculiar character. And among the Nomade nations, in a similar stage of social advancement, and who combine the freedom of the pastoral life with the commerce of caravans, and are not total strangers to the refinement of cities, the faith of Mahomet has not only obtained the easiest access, but has struck the deepest roots, and finds, as it were, its most natural disciples. For the Tartar nations in the interior parts of Asia, and the tribes of Berbers, who are the original inhabitants of the north of Africa, lead the same mode of life, though they cannot boast of the ancient origin and high descent ascribed to the Arabs. Compared with Roman degeneracy, with the corruption of the Byzantine court, with Assyrian effeminacy, and the immorality of the great Asiatic cities, this tribe-character of the Arabians, as preserved in its purity during their ancient freedom, appears undoubtedly to be of a less corrupt, more moral, and more generous nature. Doubtless the Arabs possessed in the first ages of their history, a great moral energy of will and strength of character, and even in the period of their decline, these qualities are still perceptible. On the other hand in this *tribe character*, and in those feelings of clanship, which determine all the social relations among that people; pride, party-animosities, and the spirit of revenge, are the ruling elements of life, and the passions to which all things are made subservient, or are sacrificed. The moral corruption of the human race, the profound disorder of man's whole being, is proved as well by the constant proneness of civilised nations towards a soft voluptuousness of morals, or by the innate disposition of politer classes and ages to a spirit of speculative contention, as by the rude pride and animosities of tribes, which considered in a natural point of view, appear to be purer and less corrupt in their morals, or to possess greater strength and generosity of character. Those tribe-feelings and passions of pride and hatred, anger and revenge, so prevalent among the Arabians, are displayed in their ancient poetry, and even constitute its essential spirit and purport; for

except those parables, riddles, and proverbial sayings in which the Orientals so much delight, this poetry has no mythological fictions, like that of the Indians and the Greeks, nor with the exception of a certain enthusiasm of passion, does it evince any truly fertile and inventive power of imagination.

The old Arabians never possessed, like the Indians, Egyptians, and Greeks, a poetical, high-wrought, and scientifically arranged system of polytheism. The historical traditions of their different races had much analogy with those of the Hebrews, and coincided with them in a variety of points; for as they were of the Semitic race, they deduced their origin from Abraham and the other holy patriarchs of the primitive world. Hence the tradition of a purer faith, and the simple patriarchal worship of the Deity appear to have never been totally extinguished among the Arabs; though indeed the veracious Herodotus asserts, that they adored the Assyrian Venus under the name of Alilath. But such a mixture of religious doctrines and practices is by no means incredible, when we reflect on those periods in the history of the Hebrews, when though that people were in possession of the Mosaic revelation and code of laws, and though their whole arrangements of life were founded thereon; though mighty and zealous prophets perpetually arose to warn them of their errors; they still went after Baal, and still sacrificed their children to Moloch. In the age of Mahomet, and shortly before his time, various kinds of idolatry had found their way among the Arabs from the neighbouring nations, who if not now, had formerly been plunged in the errors of paganism. At the same time several Jewish tribes existed in Arabia, and even some Christian communities, belonging mostly to the Oriental sects, mingled with the rest of the population. The neighbouring Christian monarch, or Negus of Æthiopia, also exerted considerable influence on the different tribes and communities of Arabia.

Mahomet felt the most decided aversion to all pagan idolatry, and even to all veneration of images; and it is very possible, according to the opinion of a great historian, who, on the whole does not judge the Arabian prophet unfavourably, that the expectation which the Jews still entertained of the future coming of a Deliverer and Prophet, should have operated very powerfully on the mind and imagination of Mahomet. In the same way as the Jews, then incomparably more active than

afterwards, still expected *Him* who had long since come ; so certain Christian sects, totally misunderstanding the Scriptures which they interpreted according to their own arbitrary sense, believed that the Holy Ghost and the divine Paraclete whom the Saviour had promised was yet to come ; although the Saviour had promised that the Holy Spirit should come down upon his disciples immediately after his ascension, and had added, that the same spirit should for ever abide with them. Now every one who professed himself a Christian, knew very well from the Holy Scriptures, that a supernatural light had descended on the apostles in the first assembly they held, and when as they thought, their Lord and Master had abandoned them ; and that this light had transformed the disciples, till then weak, wavering, and trembling before the world, into apostolic men filled with the spirit of God, into prophets of eternal truth and divine love, humble, but energetic, and no less heroic than enlightened. That Assister and Comforter, or that guiding Paraclete promised by God to his disciples, which in the apostles had proved itself a spirit of knowledge, of illumination, and of insight into the mysteries of faith—in the martyrs, a spirit of divine power and of heroic constancy under sufferings, was now in the great doctors of the church, and in the general councils, the guiding spirit of wisdom, rightly discerning and steadfastly adhering to the truths of revelation. But this truth did not prevent many leaders of those sects from regarding themselves in their own conceit as the Comforter and the Paraclete promised by God for the consolation of succeeding ages, or even from permitting themselves to be so considered by their own disciples. The supposition of the great historian just now cited, that these Judæo-Christian expectations of the future coming of an earthly Deliverer, Redeemer, and Teacher, or Prophet of the world, may have exerted no inconsiderable influence on the mind of Mahomet, and may have awakened similar conceptions and imaginations on his own head, is confirmed by the fact, that the Koran itself contains no very obscure allusions and references to the notions of the Paraclete, and to a supernatural and divine power and force under the very denomination used among the later Hebrews, and according to the very word sanctioned for that peculiar object.

In the time of Mahomet, and shortly before him, the Caaba at Mecca constituted the great sanctuary of Arabian worship,



This, if we may so designate it, was a simple chapel of pagan pilgrimage, which contained the black stone, the object of the religious devotion of the Arabs from a very ancient period. The idolatrous worship of such shapeless or conical blocks of stone was by no means unknown to the wayward genius of ancient polytheism. We meet with a similar form of idolatry in the mythology of the Greeks, though set off and embellished by the peculiar fancy of that people ; and instances of a like kind were to be found in the worship which the neighbouring people of Syria paid to Belus or Baal. Those stones which are frequently mentioned by ancient historians as having fallen from heaven, may probably have given rise to this peculiar species of idolatry ; and the fact itself (as now indeed is often the case with the general traditions of antiquity) is sufficiently proved by the existence of those well-known meteor stones, whose origin, though they have undergone chemical analysis, and mineralogical investigations, still remains, even in the present advanced state of modern science, a problem of no small difficulty.

The Arabian tribe from which Mahomet was sprung, had long been intrusted with the care and custody of the Caaba and the black stone, and placed its highest glory in this its allotted dignity. According to the Arabian tradition, Abraham had first erected the Caaba, and the Amalecites had afterwards repaired it. When the tribe of Koreish, who were invested with this high charge, had to rebuild this temple ; they were at a loss to know how the sacred black stone should be fixed in the walls, and what hand should touch the consecrated piece, when quite unexpectedly, this honour fell to the lot of Mahomet, than a stripling of fifteen. For this reason, we may well suppose that this ancient seat of Arabian worship—the Caaba—produced one of those youthful impressions that determined the future destiny of this extraordinary man. Even in the religious system which he afterwards founded, this ancient sanctuary with its magical stone, has remained in every age a high object of veneration ; and it is only in our times that the temple of Mecca, has been exposed to the rage of the *Wechabites*, who, though their religious fury has taken an opposite course, exhibit the old Arabian character in all its fanatical violence. But this old black stone-idol is a very remarkable feature in the history of Mahomet and of his religion.

In the holy temple of the Caaba, were kept and suspended the seven most remarkable poems which had won the prize over the other tribe-songs of the Arabs—a species of poetry peculiar to this people, and breathing all the enthusiasm of pride and hatred. In these compositions, Mahomet held a very distinguished rank, and long before he announced himself as a prophet, his poetry which far outshone that of his competitors, had raised him to a high degree of honour and consideration. It was only in the fortieth or forty-second year of his age, and after a long and solitary abode in a cavern during what the Mahometans term “the night of divine decrees,” that Mahomet formed the first determination, and thought he felt the first inward calling to the mission of a prophet. The first person that believed in this mission, and acknowledged him for a prophet, was his own wife Cadijah, who, though a rich widow, had bestowed her hand on Mahomet, when his sole patrimony consisted of five camels and an Ethiopian maid-servant, and had thus raised him to a station of wealth and independence. It is worthy of notice, that it is only in the epileptic fits to which he was subject, that he is represented as having mysterious colloquies with the angel Gabriel. Others represent him as a lunatic ; and in connexion with this charge I may mention the story, that he wished to pass with his disciples as a person transfigured in a supernatural light, and that the credulity of his followers saw the moon, or the moon’s light, descend upon him, pierce his garments, and replenish him. That veneration for the moon, which still forms a national or rather religious characteristic of the Mahometans, may perhaps have its foundation in the elder superstition, or pagan idolatry of the Arabs.

Modern historians have often complained of the difficulty of ascertaining the precise truth in the history of Mahomet, from the severity of his opponents on the one hand, and the enthusiastic admiration of his Eastern partisans, on the other. If we think proper to follow those writers only, who, by their acquaintance with the language, have copied from Arabic authorities, we shall find that their narratives are much distorted by fanaticism, and rendered almost unintelligible by an absurd exaggeration. Independently of the evident traces in this religion of a demoniacal influence and operation ; undoubted historical facts will furnish us with sufficient data for forming a clear and definitive

opinion on the character of Mahomet and the nature of his religion. Although the Arabs of that age, like other nations of that time, and the ancient Hebrews, universally thought that supernatural works were to be expected from a prophet; and that the high power of miracles was necessary to prove a divine mission; yet Mahomet found it more fitting or convenient to declare, that he could dispense with the aid of miracles, as he came not to found a new religion, but to restore the purity of the old—the faith of Abraham, and the other patriarchs. Even though we had not such clear and positive historical proofs and testimonies, respecting the nature of that presentient faith of Abraham, and the other patriarchs of the Old Testament—a faith which pointed to all the mysteries of futurity—still to suppose that the religion of those pious fathers of hoar antiquity, were nothing more than that system of (so called) pure, but in reality shallow, and meaningless, Theism, which the pretended Arabian reformer has announced to the world, would be little consonant with probability, and little conformable to the nature and march of the human mind. Considered in its true internal spirit, and divested of its outward garb of Oriental customs and symbolical language, the religion of Mahomet, on a closer investigation, will be found rather to bear a stronger affinity to the inane and superficial philosophy of the eighteenth century; and if that philosophy were honest and consistent, it would not hesitate loudly to proclaim and openly to revere Mahomet, if not as a prophet, still as a real reformer of mankind, the first promulgator and mighty teacher of truth, and the founder of the pure religion of reason.

Such a dead empty Theism, such a mere negative Unitarian faith, is little adapted for the true purposes of a religion, though it may form the basis of some scholastic system of Rationalist theology. Regarded as a religious system, the creed of Mahomet is neither old or new; but is in part perfectly void and meaningless, and in part composed of very mixed materials. The part in it which is new, is that fanatic spirit of conquest it has inculcated and diffused through the world; and that part in it which is old, is copied from the Hebrew traditions and the Christian revelation, or contains allusions to the one or to the other, including some old Arabian customs and usages which this religion has still retained.

In the first infancy of the Mahometan faith, and during the



first disputes and wars which occurred about that religion, a number of Mahomet's followers were obliged to seek refuge in Æthiopia, when the Christian monarch of that country asked them whether they were Christians. They cited in reply several passages from the sayings and poems of their prophet, relating to the Saviour, to his birth, and to the Virgin Mary. In these the prophet spoke of the birth and origin of our Saviour, as of a Gnostic eradication or emanation of divine power; and though such language was by no means consonant with the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Christ, yet it was calculated to produce on the minds of some of the eastern sectaries a very false and deceitful impression. Favourable to Christianity as some of these expressions might at first sight appear to the ignorant, there was much again that betrayed a spirit of the most decided hostility towards the Christian religion. Even the prohibition of wine was perhaps not so much intended for a moral precept, which considered in that point of view, would be far too severe, as for answering a religious design of the founder; for he might hope that the express condemnation of a liquid which forms an essential element of the Christian sacrifice, would necessarily recoil on that sacrifice itself, and thus raise an insuperable barrier between his creed and the religion of Christ. The peculiar spirit and true character of any religious system, must be judged not so much by the letter of its professed doctrines, as by its practice and prevailing usages. And thus that established custom is extremely remarkable, which makes it imperative on every Jew who may wish to become a Mahometan, previously to receive the rite of baptism. Thus did Mahomet think to stand upon the basis of Christianity; and while addressing the Arabs, he appealed solely to the religion of their first ancestor, and of the other patriarchs, he assigned in his graduated scale of revelation, the first degree to Judaism, the second to Christianity, and the third and highest to his own Islam. That he was a mere fanatic, and entirely devoid of all ambitious or political views, I cannot admit; and although he himself had even been more unconscious of a deliberate hostility towards the mysteries of the true religion, *another* may have inspired him with that subtle design.

Such then was this new, or, as the founder himself styled it, this pure old doctrine of all-conquering Islam, and of all sur-

passing faith, which this pretended restorer of the religion of Abraham—this false Paraclete of misconceived promise and idle phantasy, brought and announced to the world :—*a prophet without miracles—a faith without mysteries—and a morality without love*, which has encouraged the thirst of blood, and which began and terminated in the most unbounded sensuality. Supposing even, that one of the leading points in this system of morals, the re-establishment of polygamy to such a wide extent, and at a period of the world when this institution was formally abolished among many nations, and among others had fallen into disuse, could be in some measure excused by the customs of Asia, the wants of climate, and the general prejudices of the nation, or other like cause ;— what must we think of a code of morals professing to be divine, which in opposition to the Christian doctrine of pure happiness enjoyed by the celestial spirits in the intuition of God, and to which man must even in this life, aspire by vigilant preparation, if he wishes to render himself worthy of that state—can form no other ideal of supreme felicity—can devise no other expedient to fill up the immense void which this religion has left in the supernatural world, than a boundless Harem—a Paradise of lust, portrayed in the most glowing colours of sensuality!

That part of the Mussulman morality relating to our fellow-beings; the precepts of alms-deeds which it prescribes, is the only part entitled to praise, which we willingly accord; and we sincerely trust that not merely the commandment, but the custom and practice of charity among Christians may never prove inferior. But in every other respect, this religion permits not only hatred and vengeance, in opposition to that Christian precept so repeatedly inculcated, and so deeply engraven on our minds—the pardon of our enemies; but it encourages, and even commands irreconcilable hostility, eternal warfare, eternal slaughter, to propagate throughout the world a belief in this blood-stained prophet of pride and lust. Perhaps all the Heathen nations put together, in the long series of ages, have not offered to their false gods so many human victims, as in this new Arabian idolatry have been sacrificed to this highly extolled anti-Christian prophet. For the essence of idolatry is not in names or in words, in rites or in sacrifices; but in the nature of things, in the actual transactions of life, in un-Christian customs, and anti-Christian sentiments, and there

is even that old black stone-idol, of which I have said before in a figurative sense, that it has ever remained firmly fixed in the religion of Mahomet. The commencement of this religion was not marked by any contest about mysteries of faith, or points of doctrine; but by combats of another kind more congenial to the spirit of the Arabs, by a war which broke out between the party of Mahomet, and the hostile tribe which refused to acknowledge him for a prophet, and whose refusal occasioned his flight from Mecca. In this contest he drew the sword, fought courageously against the unbelievers, and by overpowering by force of arms all who refused to recognise him as a prophet, thought to prove his divine mission. He met, however, with much resistance, and had many factions to overcome, before he succeeded in subduing the various tribes of his nation. This contest lasted for ten years, up to the very moment of his death, when he died master of all Arabia. Shortly before that event, he wrote very insolent letters to the Emperor Heraclius, and the great King of Persia, summoning them to acknowledge him for a prophet, and to believe in his mission. Both gave rather evasive replies, than positive refusals;—so great was the terror which this new power of Hell had already struck into the world.

Immediately on the death of Mahomet, a great contest arose among his disciples. On one side Ali, his son-in-law by marriage with his daughter Fatima, and on the other Abubeker, his father-in-law, whose daughter Ayesha was the surviving widow of the prophet, and who was afterwards succeeded by Omar, contended with all the might of their respective adherents for superiority and dominion; and this bloody family-quarrel, which distracted the very infancy of the Arabian empire, has produced among Mahometan nations a long and protracted religious schism, which has continued down to the present day. This was originally a mere personal dispute, and not a dogmatic controversy as among Christian sects; for the religion of Mahomet furnishes no matter for such controversies, as in reality it contains little of a doctrinal nature, and recognises no dogmas but the two contained in the seven Arabic words of the well-known symbol of Islam:—"There is no God but God, and Mahomet is the Apostle of God." The one of these is a declaration of the self-evident tenet of the unity of God, but levelled indirectly against the



Christian dogma of the Trinity; while the other expresses the divine mission of Mahomet, and by calling forth a veneration that leads to the contempt and rejection of all things besides, has, in a practical point of view, really established a new species of idolatry. Abubeker and Omar asserted that they alone were the legitimate Caliphs and successors of Mahomet; and as the partisans of Ali rejected the supplement founded on oral tradition, to the poems and maxims of the prophet, they were stigmatised as schismatics by the opposite party. In Persia, the sect of Ali has remained predominant down to the present day; and as in that country, the ancient traditions and old national poetry have been partly preserved, and have been combined in a very peculiar manner with the tenets of Mahometism, many bolder, freer, and less contracted notions have found their way among this people. Hence it is very possible that on a closer investigation, we could discover a great difference in the intellectual character of these two sects, not so much, perhaps, in religious doctrines, about which there is here little room for inquiry, as in moral feelings and views of life.

The progress of the Arabian conquests was not checked by these internal disputes. Five years after the death of Mahomet, and fifteen from the commencement of the Hegira, the city of Jerusalem was conquered by the arms of the Arabs; and in the eighteenth year of the same era, Egypt became a Mussulman province. The thirteenth year of the Hegira was not yet terminated, before the whole empire of Persia was subdued, and its last monarch of the race of Sassanides, Yezdegerd, had perished in foreign parts, a suppliant and a fugitive. In the fiftieth year of the Hegira, Arabian vessels menaced and besieged Constantinople, which was indebted for its deliverance chiefly to the use of the Greek fire. In the ninetieth year of the same era, while on one side the Arabs extended their victorious arms over India, they subverted on the other the Visi-Goth kingdom in Spain and Portugal, and became masters of the whole Hesperian peninsula, as far as those inaccessible mountains, in whose fastnesses a fugitive remnant of the ruling Goths, and of the old inhabitants of the country had intrenched themselves, thence to carry on that struggle for freedom, which till the final conquest of Granada, and the complete expulsion of the Moors from Spain, lasted for a period of eight hundred

years. After the downfall of the first dynasty of Caliphs of the house of Ommiyah, and the subsequent accession of the Abbassides to the empire, a separate and independent Caliphate was established in Mussulman Spain, and lasted there for several ages. The Arabs had scarce achieved the conquest of Spain, when they aspired to the possession of the Visi-Goth and Burgundian provinces of France. But a term was at last put to the progress of their arms, by the mighty victory which the Frank hero, Charles Martel, gained between Tours and Poitiers, over their general, Abderame, who fell on the field with the flower of his troops, in the twentieth year after the conquest of Spain, and in the hundred and tenth year of the Hegira. Thus did the arm of Charles Martel save and deliver the Christian nations of the West, from the deadly grasp of all-destroying Islam. In Asia the universal dominion of the Arabs was more and more firmly consolidated, and the second of the Abbassides, Almansor, erected the city of Bagdad, or the new Babylon, not far from the country where the old was situated, and which was thenceforth the vast metropolis of an immense empire.\*

\* It may not perhaps be uninteresting to the reader to compare with Schlegel's account of Mohammedanism, an admirable though briefer sketch of the same religion by the hand of another great master—the illustrious Goerres. In the Synopsis which he has published of the Lectures on Universal History, that he has been for several years delivering at Munich, we find the following remarkable passage on the Mohammedan religion. The author after speaking of the various trials which the Christian church had to endure, says: “Hence the young church must wrestle with all the forms of error in the Gnostic doctrines and in the other heresies; one after the other she remains the triumphant conqueress over all, and maintains against every attack her well-balanced equilibrium. At length, when the contest has raged for centuries, the enemy combines in one focus all the scattered rays of error; and the Prophet of Mecca knows how to balance himself therein. The *rigid Monotheism* of his doctrine, which by denying the Trinity, and with it all personal manifestation of the Deity, limits its idea to the depths of eternity, without admitting any true or living communication of the Godhead with what appertains to time, naturally allures the metaphysical pride which in this abstraction hath made itself its own god. The *ethical Pantheism* which this religion professes, while it furnishes a pretext, a motive, and a palliation to all the pretensions of the mighty, to the ambition of usurpers, the violence of pride, and the arrogance of tyranny, and at the same time consoles and disarms the injured and the oppressed, by the inevitableness of destiny, must draw to its preacher the men of the sword, of violence, and of blood, and link those once bound indissolubly to him. The *sensual Eudaimonism*, to

The new religion and conquests of the Arabs may be considered in the light of a new migration of nations, as no inconsiderable portion of the Moorish population passed into Spain; and this Arabian migration has exerted in Asia and in Africa, a far more extensive influence on empire, language, manners, political institutions, and intellectual cultivation, than the invasion of the Germanic tribes has exercised in Europe. When we compare the emigrations of the Germanic tribes, with those of the Arabs, and consider the violence which characterised the latter, the pernicious influence they have exerted on the human mind, and on civilisation, and the despotism they have invariably introduced into political and domestic society, we may look upon the migrating tribes of Germany, almost as colonies, which though originally they partook of a warlike character, yet inclined more and more to a peaceful nature; and ultimately assumed that spirit, when the tumult of intermediate anarchy had subsided, and Christianity had more intimately blended and finally incorporated the new settlers and the old inhabitants.

As the divine author of Christianity had promised his disciples, that the high power of God should ever abide with them, should guide and defend them; and that the assisting and counselling Spirit of truth, of peaceful order, and of active zeal should never be removed from them; the efficacy of this divine promise was now manifested during this intermediate period of anarchy; and though in a different form from what it appeared in the earlier ages of the church, yet was it perfectly adapted to the exigencies of time. The great problem of the age was first in this new agglomeration of nations, to endeavour to allay the agitated elements of society, till after that agitation had subsided, they should grow and strengthen into organic life and

which his creed opens so free a scope, both in this world and the next, must rally round the apostle of lust, the multitude that burns with all the passionate glow of that fervid zone, and place under his control all the wild, fiery energies of that region. And thus do the cold doctrine, the cutting steel, and the destroying flame go before him as his missionaries; and the south and the east, and soon even a part of the European west, are bowed under the yoke of his religion: and while in the Caliphate he founds for it a new spiritual and secular empire, the modern world between Christianity and Mohammedanism becomes divided into night and day."—"Goerres *Über die Grundlage der Weltgeschichte*," page 99-100. Breslaw, 1830.—*Trans.*



form ; and next, to preserve the heritage of European science and letters, and thus sow the seeds of a richer and more flourishing harvest for future ages. And to affect this by the mild and genial influence of Christianity, was the object, the task, and the work of the distinguished ecclesiastics, bishops, dignitaries, and other apostolic men of those ages. The two great popes, Leo and Gregory, shone conspicuous above all their contemporaries, and were in that period of anarchy, a pillar of strength and a shield of safety to afflicted Rome and Italy—the guardians of European society and of Christian science. Both by their practical and instructive writings, are considered as the last of the ancient fathers ; and Leo even is remarkable for great purity of diction and force of eloquence. In point of science and learning, the succeeding bishops and dignitaries of the church cannot indeed be compared with the ancient fathers ; but on the other hand, they united with a true Christian piety a practical sense that never failed to discern everywhere what was fitting for the emergency of the moment. The monastic schools founded by St. Benedict were indeed of a very different nature from the primitive eremitical institutes of Egypt ; and entirely adapted to the exigencies of Europe in that age, they were the asylums and seminaries of learning and philosophic contemplation ; and while they promoted the interests of education, they were equally conducive to the progress of agriculture. A number of works have sufficiently shown how much the influence of the Benedictine order, which for many centuries extended over all the countries of the West, has advanced the intellectual civilisation of modern Europe, and indeed sown its first seeds.

By Bishop Boniface the Christian religion was established and widely diffused in the interior of Germany. At an earlier period, other holy men animated with an apostolic zeal, forty of whom were sent by Pope Gregory the Great, carried the light of the Gospel into Britain ; where it was received with peculiar avidity by the Picts and Scots, and the old inhabitants of Erin, as well as by the Anglo-Saxons. In true Christian piety, and in such knowledge and science as the age possessed, England during this Saxon period, prior and down to the reign of Alfred, maintained nearly a pre-eminence above the other kingdoms of the West. Even that apostle of the Germans, Boniface, originally named Winfried, came from England ; and

among the writers of the age, Alcuin asserted the intellectual superiority of the Anglo-Saxon Christians. Limited as was the knowledge of the western world in those ages, and narrow the circle of European science and learning, still we find in those times, but almost only in the West, writers of very original powers, and peculiar turn of mind, whose writings, composed either in a barbarous Latin, or in a half-formed Romanic vernacular tongue, are the faithful and instructive mirrors of the spirit of the times. On the other hand, the later Byzantine writers, though they possessed incomparably greater resources, and much more extensive philological acquirements, have produced nothing but learned compilations.

Now there arose in the West, Christian kings, heroes, and legislators, both among the Franks and the Saxons, such as Charlemagne and Alfred, who as men were not indeed faultless, but who should be judged and appreciated according to the character of their times; a knowledge of which is necessary for rightly understanding the spirit of these extraordinary men. In peace and in war they endeavoured firmly to establish and new model society on Christian principles and maxims; and they restored the western in the form of a great Christian empire, destined to defend and protect all Christian states—all the civilised nations of the European confederacy, against barbarian invasion and internal anarchy.

If we compare these Frank and Saxon kings and emperors, valiant and chivalrous as they were, thirsting for glory, yet seeking and establishing peace, honouring justice, and founding or restoring laws, on one hand with those Saracen rulers and caliphs, ever burning with a rage for conquest and destruction, and on the other hand, with that Byzantine court, presenting almost always the uniform picture of corruption, and ruling over an empire pining in hopeless decay—if we contrast those flashes of genius which distinguished the writings of the western nations, with the dead, spiritless monotony pervading all the productions of the Byzantine intellect, superior as the Greeks were to the rest of Europe in erudition, science, and literary stores; we shall find in this comparison, (taking into consideration the imperfection of all human things, and actions, and persons, for even in this period of the world, errors and defects are to be found in the conduct of individuals mixed up with the most praiseworthy qualities) we shall find, I say, in

this comparison, the best vindication and the highest eulogium of the Catholic West and its earlier history. The misrepresentation of that history formerly so frequently made by the passions, the exaggerations, and the prejudices of party, has still an injurious influence, but is with us no longer in season ; for the moment has arrived, when fixed in the right centre, we must now begin to take a more complete and comprehensive survey of the primitive world, and classical antiquity, next of the history of the middle age, and of modern times, down to the present day, and to that approaching futurity still in the crisis of its formation ; and when we must judge them with more correctness in all their details, and understand them better by examining their relative position in the great plan of history, and estimate them all by the standard given to us by God, which is the only true one. Then we shall judge these particulars without predilection, and without aversion, "*sine odio et sine dilectione*," which is somewhat more than that excellent and greatest of all ancient historians, who gave utterance to this saying, really accomplished, or was indeed in his time and with his principles capable of accomplishing. For it is only the knowledge and complete comprehension of the great scheme of history, which can enable us to rise above the particular transactions of our own, or of a foreign nation, of the present times or of past ages ; and it is this knowledge which can alone clearly and safely determine the feeling with which we should regard particular historical facts. But for that end, the ancient historian, as well as all antiquity, wanted the clue which Christianity alone has given us, to the internal connexion of the world's history, and which they who seek for it elsewhere but in this religion, will certainly seek in vain.

In this period of anarchy, and during the sway of the Lombards, the circumstances of the times gave to the popes a paramount authority in the internal administration of the city and district of Rome ; as well as a general political influence over all Italy ; an influence which was for the most part very salutary, and tended effectually to insure the public peace and prosperity. I must here observe that this political position and power of the popes, so naturally adapted to the circumstances of the times, and to the general situation of the western world, was first put in a clear and correct point of view by writers not belonging to the Catholic church. For the politi-



cal historians. on the Catholic side have, in almost every country, retained too lively a recollection of the warm disputes as to the respective limits and rights of the ecclesiastical and secular power, not to be swayed by such feelings in their conception and accounts of an age long gone by ; and this has certainly weakened the impartiality becoming the tribunal of history.

After the subversion of the Ostro-Goth dominion in Italy, the disgrace or dissatisfaction of the Byzantine general, Narses, provoked the incursion of the Lombards into Italy. This people were not so exclusively devoted to the Arian party, as a portion of them, and several among their kings professed the Catholic religion ; but they were far from possessing the mild, generous character of the Goths, and their sway often proved oppressive in Italy. Yet every thing appeared more desirable and more tolerable in the opinion of many otherwise unprejudiced historians, than the impending danger of Byzantine rule. When in the middle of the seventh century, the Greek Emperor Constans II. waged war in Italy against the Lombards, and in the course of the war conquered Rome, the plunder, especially of the treasures of ancient art, was so immense, that compared with these Greek devastations, all the earlier and destructive ravages of the Goths appeared to be nothing. The ships which were conveying to Constantinople all these plundered treasures of art, fell into the hands of the Arabs, and were destroyed, so that it was never known what became of their valuable freight. So true it is, that Rome perished solely and entirely by her own hand, by internal discord, and the weight of her own corruption, and not by the hands of Germans or of Goths.

When at the commencement of the eighth century, the dominion of the rude Lombards became oppressive, and the Greek sway under the Iconoclast Leo was still more detested, and all the cities and provinces of Italy had revolted against it ; Pope Gregory II. without any previous concert, and by unanimous consent, was placed at the head of the Italian league, and declared its chief ; but he warned his countrymen against the dangers of precipitation, exhorted them to the maintenance of peace, and ever cherished the hope of obtaining a friendly reconciliation with the Byzantine emperor. The rigid prohibition of the religious use of images was proper in those cases

only, where the use of them was not confined to a mere devotional respect, but was likely to degenerate into a real adoration and idolatry, and where a strict separation from pagan nations and their rites was a matter of primary importance, as was the case in the Jewish dispensation of old. But now that the Mahomedan proscription, and scornful rejection of all holy emblems and images of devotion, arose from a decidedly anti-Christian spirit, that displayed itself either in open violence or secret machination against the Christian religion; this Byzantine attack on images, and this furious war against all symbols of piety, which in its ulterior consequences might and must have proceeded to much greater lengths, can be regarded only as a mad contagion of the moral disease of the age. This disorder and frenzy indeed subsided; and the Greeks of the Byzantine empire in their religious rites, as well as dogmas, have remained Christians, and faithful to the old Christian traditions. Yet this controversy on the use of images, and the animosities and jealousies which it enkindled between the Christians of the East and West, did not a little contribute to that perfectly groundless, irrational, and unhappy schism which has severed the Greeks from the universal church.

The protracted contest between the kings of Lombardy and the Greek Exarchs of Ravenna, (during whose disputes the popes' felt the calling and inclination, but had not the power to exercise the high functions of protectors to oppressed Italy,) naturally provoked the arbitration of the Franks, led to the establishment of their protectorate over Italy, and was thus the first occasion of the restoration of the Western Empire, and of the foundation of the great Christian imperial monarchy. The sublime idea of such an empire sprang solely and entirely out of circumstances and events, as they arose, and had not by any individual been fully anticipated, much less clearly understood. Hence we cannot attribute to any persons the blame or entire merit of events that really took place of themselves, by the mere force of circumstances, the spirit of the times, and the happy impulse of a lofty inspiration. Nor can we at this remote distance of time, and under circumstances so totally dissimilar, institute a formal discussion (in the manner of the Jurists) on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of any particular measure in this great series of public acts. No country besides was oppressed by so many and such contending rulers, as that Italy which had

once bowed all nations beneath her yoke. Sicily, which had been conquered by the Arabs, laboured under the most cruel oppression; and it was the tyrannical conduct of the Greek governors that had paved the way for the conquest of that island. In the third century, the Franks had already migrated into Gaul; their rulers were from the origin of their empire most devoted to Christianity; and had besides in their conduct towards kindred or neighbouring nations, evinced a more judicious, prudent, and systematic policy, than had been shown by any other Germanic or Gothic tribe, in the invasion and subsequent government of the Roman provinces. This nation, which from its origin had ever been warmly attached to the Catholic church, which had subdued the Visi-Goth kingdom in Gaul, had become masters of the Burgundian provinces, while it perpetually strove to extend and consolidate its dominion in the interior of Germany; was now, after its splendid victory over the Saracens, and the general protection which this victory had insured to all Christendom, called into Italy, less by the pope and the Romans, than by the state of affairs, and the urgency of times and circumstances, there to terminate anarchy, and re-establish the ancient order of things, or one better adapted to the exigencies of the age. The empire of the Franks was henceforward the most powerful state in the West, and was indeed the great centre of the civilised world; as afterwards became, though on a higher and more extended scale, the great Christian empire of the middle age in Germany and in Italy. Here we find that high clue in human history to which we should ever adhere—on one side, the luminous trace of the more immediate providence of God—and on the other, the gradual unfolding of the human mind, evinced in science as in language, in feelings as in modes of thinking—an intellectual development, which though often concealed, and, as it were, buried beneath the agitated surface of external events, forms (together with the conduct of Divine Providence,) the real and essential matter and purport in the history and progress of human communities. In this respect, if we regard either of the then two great rival powers in the East, we shall find that neither the dead monotony of the Byzantine empire, sinking ever lower in the scale of moral, political, and intellectual degradation, nor the more hasty growth and the internal distraction of the Saracenic empire, (presenting, as it does, in its long series of political catastrophes, military revolutions, and



frequent changes of dynasty, the same tedious uniformity of despotism), will furnish much matter of interest or of moment to the philosophic historian. It is in this period of the world, the gradual organisation of the Christian state, as in a later age, the development of Christian science, which chiefly commands our regard, naturally so curious after all that relates to the concerns and destinies of mankind, and fixes our attention exclusively, or more particularly, on that European West, where all now displayed a fuller life, and a more constant movement and activity.

The territorial partitions, and the various feuds and dissensions which occurred between the Frank kings, possess but little, or at best a subordinate interest, amid the great events of the times—it is the leading idea of the age, the progressive march of society at this period, which offers matter of instruction to the historian. Many faults and errors, however, stained the first execution of this grand plan of a Christian empire;—such, for instance, were those wars which Charlemagne waged against the Saxons, as well as similar wars under his predecessors in the preceding age; for the propagation of the Christian religion by such means of coercion, can scarcely ever be excused, and in no case entirely justified. The best excuse is perhaps in the fact, that all wars between tribes nearly allied, are like family disputes, usually conducted with greater stubbornness and animosity. However, in the year 784, Charlemagne concluded with the Saxons a peace which was very advantageous to the latter; and the extremely prosperous and flourishing condition of the empire, and even of the countries in the north of Germany, under Henry, the first king of the Saxon race, proves at least that the evil was confined within very narrow limits, and had not been productive of such widespread and protracted desolation.

In the transition from the Carolingian to the Capetian dynasty, we should not forget that the monarchy was not strictly hereditary in any German state, but was for the most part merely elective; and it was only he, who had proved himself a valiant, prudent, and powerful defender of his nation, that became the man of the public choice. Royalty was then considered more in the light of an office, a charge, a peculiar calling, than of an inheritance or patrimony. The general idea of the Christian empire, was a universal protectorate over all

Christian nations and countries—a mighty central dominion founded on justice, while the great connecting and pervading power of the whole system was supposed to reside in the perfect unity of religious principles. When this religious unity was destroyed, the whole political edifice fell to pieces ; and in the struggles of later times, the artificial relations founded on a mere mechanical balance of power, on a republican equality of states, without the foundation of Christian or any other solid principles, have furnished, as experience has shown, but a very bad substitute for that old Christian brotherhood of the European states and nations ; and have in the general subversion of Christian morality, produced a sort of polite disorder and refined anarchy.

In the partition of the Carlovingian empire—a partition which was only in accordance with those principles of descent which regulated the inheritance of the great families—we can trace an almost heroic, and if we might use the expression, a naïve patriarchal confidence in the duration of that religious unity ; for it was only on such a basis that men deemed it possible to combine the advantage of the domestic, internal government of a country limited in extent, with the control of one general superintending monarchy. When a man of such consummate prudence, such long foresight, and powerful understanding as Charlemagne, deemed such a scheme not impracticable, and thought it possible to maintain the political unity of his empire, under the joint dominion of his sons, and by their subordination to their eldest brother ; we should learn not to judge the plan with too much precipitation, and according to the notions of our times, and our present systems of policy. This first partition which Charlemagne had designed, was prevented by the hand of death. The entire division of the whole Carlovingian empire into three distinct portions, was first effected by Lewis the Pious ; but the perpetual family dissensions which occurred under his successors, the weakness or violence of their characters, and the various factions which arose, rendered totally impossible the maintenance of that union, which was originally sought to be perpetuated in the empire, and led to the final dismemberment and total dissolution of the old empire of the Franks, when another dynasty succeeded to the imperial crown.

In the primitive monarchy of the Germans, however, the existence of the four great national duchies, which were subor-

dinate to the imperial crown, far more happily accomplished this union of a local, domestic, and paternal government with the control of one powerful and superintending monarchy ; so long at least as internal union subsisted, and discord had not obtained the supremacy. There then existed, though mostly in a different form than afterwards, a division of powers in the state as well as in the church ; but unity in this division, or with this division, was sought for only in Christian and national sentiments ; and as long as these subsisted in their integrity, the body politic remained unimpaired. At no time has a political constitution or mode of government been devised, which could permanently supply the place of principle.

In the national meetings of the great and smaller states of that age, in their assembled councils of dukes and princes, bishops, counts and lords, nobles and freemen (to whom were added the commons of the cities, when by their rights and privileges they began to obtain importance), we must look for the first germ of all the succeeding parliaments and states-general of the European nations, and of the rights of the different orders of society, and the privileges and corporate immunities of the cities. All these rights and liberties were purely local—they grew up on the root of national customs—they were founded on no speculative theory of universal equality, but on positive usage and special laws. The union and stability of an empire was then sought for not in the balance of artificial forms, but in the holy heritage of ancient customs ; in principle, in short.

On this basis, first of Christian, then of national sentiments, do all Christian states repose ; and when this foundation is destroyed, those states are undone. Ecclesiastical power had then a real and substantial weight, and a very extended circle of operation ; although its limits and relations with secular authority were not so rigidly circumscribed as afterwards. To be sensible that this division of power will not necessarily impair the unity of strength and spirit in the social frame, as long as principle remains pure, and religious concord is preserved ; we need only call to our recollection the fact, that all Christian states and kingdoms have sprung from this happy agreement between secular and ecclesiastical authority, and that this union was the sure foundation of their stability. And so long as both powers remained in harmonious accord, the times were pros-



perous, peace and justice ever increased, and the condition of nations was flourishing and happy. Christianity, says a great historian, who manifests a greater predilection for antiquity, and even for the Oriental world, but whose comprehensive intellect often rightly appreciates the benign influence of this religion, which with us must have the priority; Christianity was the electric spark which first roused the warlike nations of the north, rendered them susceptible of a higher civilisation, stamped the peculiar character, and founded the political institutions of modern nations, which have sprung out of such heterogeneous elements. And we may add, Christianity was the connecting power which linked together the great community of European nations, not only in the moral and political relations of life, but in science and modes of thinking. The church was like the all-embracing vault of heaven, beneath whose kindly shelter, those warlike nations began to settle in peace, and gradually to frame their laws and institutions. Even the office of instruction, the heritage of ancient knowledge, the promotion of science, and of all that tended to advance the progress of the human mind, devolved to the care of the church, and were exclusively confined to the Christian schools. If science was then of a very limited range, it was still quite proportioned to the exigencies and intellectual cultivation of the age; for mankind cannot transcend all the degrees of civilisation by a single bound, but must mount slowly and in succession its various grades; and at any rate, science was not at that time unprofitably buried in libraries and in the closets of the learned, as was afterwards the case in Europe, and even partly then among the Byzantines. The little knowledge which was then possessed, was by the more active spirit, and the sound understanding and practical sense of the European nations, and their better priesthood, applied with general advantage to the interests of society. Science was not then, as in the later period of its proud ascendancy, in open hostility with the pure dictates of faith and the institutions of life. On that world so variously excited in peace, as in war, and by the different pursuits of art and industry, useful knowledge and wholesome speculation descended, not like a violent flood, but like the soft distillations of the refreshing dew, or the gentle drops of fertilising rain, from the Heaven of faith which over-arched the whole.

## LECTURE XIII.

On the Formation and Consolidation of the Christian Government in Modern Times—On the Principle which led to the Establishment of the Old German Empire.

THE first three centuries of the Christian era, and of modern history, compose the epoch when, by a second fiat of creation, the light of Christianity spread through the whole Roman world, and when after undergoing long persecutions, the religion of Christ, under Constantine, came victorious out of the struggle. The second epoch, or the succeeding five centuries, comprehend that chaotic and intermediate state in the history of mankind, or the transition from declining antiquity to modern times, growing out of the ruins of the ancient world—the fermenting mixture of many and various elements of social life. But when at last the tempest had disburdened itself of its fury, the clouds had broken asunder, and the pure firmament of Christian faith had stretched out its ample vault to shelter the rise of new communities; when the wild waters of that mighty inundation of nations had begun gradually to flow off; then the Germanic tribes, incorporated with the Romanic nations, laid the deep, firm soil on which modern European society was to spring up and flourish. For it was Charlemagne who laid the sure foundation for Christian government, and all the improvements of its subsequent superstructure. On this basis of Christian government, and Christian manners, and under the cover and vivifying influence of the luminous firmament of Christian faith, sprang human science out of the small fragments of ancient art and learning, which had survived all these mighty devastations; till at last it expanded into a fuller bloom, and grew into a more heavenly and Christian form. This new progress of social man under the Christian form of government, and this progress of the human mind in Christian science, mark the third epoch of modern history, or the seven centuries which elapsed from the reign of Charlemagne, to the discovery of the New World, and the commencement of the Re-

formation. It may naturally be supposed that these seven centuries which witnessed the progressive civilisation of modern nations, and the vigorous growth and wide spread of Christian principles, were at the same time a period of struggle both in the state and in science, and that in each of these departments, the spirit of Christianity was intermixed with, and most injuriously and fatally thwarted and opposed by, many un-Christian elements. And indeed, to discover and discriminate between these conflicting elements, to comprehend and determine their mutual bearings one towards the other, is the fit problem for historical philosophy. The progress of the Christian state and the advancement of Christian science, form during this period the main subject of an universal history, when this is not a mere collection of special or national histories, but truly universal, in the philosophic sense of the term ; treating solely of those subjects common to all mankind, or which illustrate the general march of humanity. Hence all other historical views, dictated by a predilection for one's own country—inquiries into the political institutions of one, or several, or all existing states—a review of the circle of mercantile operations, and their gradual extension, and of the progress of the mechanical arts—and lastly, curious and erudite dissertations on literature, philology, and the fine arts (however interesting, instructive, and in many respects useful, such special dissertations may be in themselves)—all these must be either entirely excluded from general history, or must at least occupy a place very subordinate to, and are deserving of notice only as far as they illustrate, what must ever constitute, the main subject of the Philosophy of History. In the first ages of the world, it is often difficult to obtain satisfactory information, and a competent degree of certainty on the subjects which are alone, or at least chiefly, worthy of attention. But in modern times, it is a far more arduous task to select out of the immense multitude and variety of facts susceptible of historical proof, those which are of a general interest to mankind, and amid the crowd of details steadily to preserve the general outline of history.

It would be a great error to refer to the Christian constitution of the state and of science, every remarkable or important incident in the history of government and of science, merely because such incidents have occurred in the middle age, or among Christian nations of later times. We must strive to



form a loftier idea of the Christian model both in science and in government, so that the highest and noblest monuments in either, should, from human infirmity, be considered but faint approximations, I do not say, to the unattainable standard of an imaginary perfection, but to the sober reality of Christian truth. Although it is not possible rigidly to separate public life from public opinions, on account of the intimate union between both, and the mutual influence which government and science exercise over one another; yet as the state is the groundwork for the cultivation of science, and the former must precede the latter, I shall follow this historical order, and commence with the constitution of the Christian state.

As here the question is not as to the *Beau Ideal* of supreme perfection, or as to a precise, rigid, and scientific theory of the Christian state (for which here, at least, if not for the present age, the time may not have arrived), but merely as to a general outline of such a theory, I shall only observe, that the Christian state must rest on the basis of religious feelings. For, without feeling, its relation to religion cannot be conceived—and such a mere relation, considered in itself, would lose its religious character. But the government which is founded on Christianity, is on that account limited, and is consequently in its very nature abhorrent either from absolute despotism, or the uncontrolled tyranny of popular factions. In the next place, the government founded on religion, is one in which sentiment, personal spirit, and personal character are the primary and ruling elements, and not the dead letter, and the written formula of a mere artificial constitution. In this last respect one may say, that the Christian government inclines very strongly towards monarchy; for, in monarchy, it is the sacred person of the king, the character of the ruler, the spirit of his administration, confidence in his person, and attachment to the hereditary dynasty, which form the basis, the animating spirit, and vivifying principle of the social system. In a republic it is not the person, but the law which governs; nay, the written word of the law is there of the utmost importance; and thus the dead letter of the constitution is in a republic almost as sacred, as in a monarchy the person called and consecrated to the functions of government by divine right. But more than this we should not say—namely, that the Christian government, founded as it is on personality and on

sentiment, inclines, *on the whole*, strongly towards the monarchical form—a leaning which is by no means incompatible with many republican usages and republican institutions of a subordinate kind. Still less should we exaggerate this idea so far, as to maintain that the Christian government is entirely and necessarily monarchical, even in its outward form; and that a republic is objectionable at all times and under all circumstances without distinction. Such absolutism in the doctrines of public law, and in the theory of government, is very remote from true Christian principles. The unhistorical government of mere reason—the destructive principle of revolution—is indeed totally incompatible with Christianity; principally because the Christian religion tolerates and recognises all legal institutions, such as they are, without inquiring into their origin (as the gospel not only left inviolate, but even respected the legality of the Roman dominion in the conquered and incorporated countries), and also because the Christian notion of right, like the Christian system of government, is by no means absolute, but is ever qualified by circumstances. A republican government, which is founded not so much on the abstract or rationalist principle of absolute freedom and equality, but on ancient customs and hereditary rights, on freedom of sentiment and generosity of character, consequently on personality, is by no means essentially opposed to the true spirit of monarchy; still less is it inconsistent with the Christian theory of government. But a despotism, illegitimate, not perhaps in its origin, but in its abuse of power, strikes at the first principles of the Christian state, whose mild, temperate, and historical character is as abhorrent from absolutism, as from the opposite principle of unqualified freedom and universal equality—the revolutionary principle, which involves the overthrow of all existing rights.

As in the Christian's estimation, the worth and excellence of an individual is not to be judged by his outward appearance, or by the observance of certain forms, but by the sincerity of his inward sentiments, so the same observation will apply to states. It is the spirit and purpose of an action, the nature of a deed, the personal conduct displayed in a public measure, and not any outward form, which proves or determines the good or evil tendency of any important act, which may be the subject of history. That Christian tone and spirit which be-

longs to the government of the illustrious, but not immaculate Charlemagne, does not proceed from the circumstance, that he, like Alfred after him, solicited the counsels and co-operation of his bishops in framing laws for the various provinces of his empire (for many of these laws contained moral injunctions), or that at Rome the pope placed the imperial crown upon his head. But the Christian spirit of his government is evinced by that lofty idea which filled up the whole of his active life—by his conception of the relations of church and state, and of the utility of science for the civilisation of nations—by his project of an universal empire, destined to embrace and protect all civilised nations—the noble fabric of modern Christendom, of which he laid the first foundation-stone, and which reveals his enlarged views, comprehending alike his own age and succeeding times.

But whenever we meet in history with a government which, independently of outward forms, is founded on the love of divine justice—on a principle of self-devotion, whereby rulers are ready to sacrifice their own interest, and even their own existence, in the cause of justice and of social order—these, we may be sure, are the certain and indubitable marks of the realisation of the Christian theory of law and government. On the other hand, wherever we perceive despotism or violence, or what we feel to be absolute wrong, though they be veiled under the sanction of spiritual or temporal power, then we may be sure the whole enterprise is un-Christian, as the principle is un-Christian. Of all the different forms of this political disease, of the manifold kinds of tyranny, whether ecclesiastical or secular, military or commercial, domestic or municipal, academic or aristocratic, the despotism of popular licentiousness is the most reprehensible in principle, and the most destructive in its effects.

With the usages and institutions of the Germanic nations, this peculiar temper of the Christian religion perfectly harmonised; incomparably better, at least, than with the arbitrary government of the Roman state, which, even after the conversion of Constantine, still retained in all essential points a pagan character. In the old German states, the system of hereditary monarchy mostly prevailed;—but it was quite alien from absolutism, and was intermixed with many republican institutions, laws, and customs. The whole system of those governments was founded on the historical basis of ancient



usages—on the pure, free, and generous sentiment of honour—on personal glory and personal character and talents. As soon as this natural moral energy of the Germanic nations had received a religious consecration from Christianity, and those energetic, heroic souls had imbibed with fervour, simplicity, and humility, the maxims of the religion of love; all the elements of a truly Christian government, and Christian system of policy were then offered to mankind. The political history of those ancient times has been mostly represented in a too systematic point of view, for the purpose of favouring some particular object, or interest, or some favourite opinion of modern times; since historians employ all their ingenuity in tracing, step by step, and disclosing to our view the first rise and gradual growth of any particular form of government, or principle of right—such as the establishment of royalty on the one hand, and that of the constitution of the three orders on the other. But they remain quite unconcerned about every more exalted principle in society. To judge and appreciate not according to the standard of our own or any other age, but according to the dictates of eternal truth, the manners, the modes of thinking, the tone of society, the spirit and views which animated men, whatever was good or evil, Christian or anti-Christian in their sentiments, is with these writers a matter of the utmost indifference. If there is any exception from the truth of this remark, it is when they meet with some singular trait of manners or character—some historical paradox calculated to stimulate interest, and which they then never fail to sever from its general connexion with the age, to tear up from its natural roots, and exhibit to the curiosity of the beholder. And yet in such individual traits of character in the middle age, though they be at first remarked only from their singularity, and be not even fully understood, more traces of historical life and truth are to be found, than in those systematic representations of history, drawn up with some specific political view, and which aim at an elaborate dissection and violent disruption of institutions, which in those early times, were inseparably united in the life of Christian nations. If the best and most praiseworthy measures adopted in that first period of Christian polity, for the settlement and further improvement of the Christian state, and for the establishment and application of Christian maxims and principles of government, were

nothing more than a generous effort, a good intention, a rude design—a feeble, imperfect approximation towards a divine term—yet we must consider them as peculiar historical phenomena, leave them in their individual bearings, and not prematurely force them into any systematic connexion, or attach them to any fixed or formal principle of right; for in the Christian government, feeling and personality are the most essential things.

If I could overstep the narrow limits of this work, confined as it is to a rapid sketch of the main and essential facts in the historical progress of mankind, I should prefer to draw a portrait of the mode of government and prevalent opinions of that age, out of the many characteristic traits in the lives of its distinguished rulers, its great and virtuous kings and emperors, knights, and heroes, such as that Charlemagne, who would rightly open the series, that pious King Alfred, who in a far more contracted sphere, was equally great, those first Saxon kings and emperors of Germany—princes distinguished for their religious and virtuous sentiments, their great and upright character, and whose reigns exhibiting as they do, the paramount influence of religion on public life, constitute the happiest era, and the truly golden period of our annals. The peculiar nature and constitution, the internal spirit and essence of the Christian state, would be much more clearly and vividly represented by the examples of these great characters, who to the pure will of their energetic, heroic souls, united a practical knowledge of life, and a natural insight into the principles of Christian policy. Such a course I would prefer to entangling myself in the usual disputes about the respective relations of the spiritual and temporal powers, and all the contentious points involved in that matter; or to entering upon any dissertation respecting the decisive era in the development of royalty and its rights, or in the progress of the constitution of the three estates, and of various municipal corporations; however useful and instructive such inquiries may be in the special history of particular countries. And even in the latter respect, those glorious names form a mighty epoch; and in the history of almost all the great European countries, we meet with some holy and magnanimous monarch, who laid the solid foundations of his country's constitution, or introduced a higher civility and refinement in life and manners. Such were in Hungary the holy King Stephen, and in France, the great

St. Lewis; who in more unquiet times restored a better spirit, and for a while retarded the progress of corruption. There were also other kings, heroes, and emperors, like Rodolph of Hapsburgh, who, without being honoured with the title of saints, were truly pious, chivalric, and equitable monarchs, and may be esteemed and revered as the Christian regenerators of their age, and the founders of a true and religious system of government and manners. A lively sketch of such men and rulers, who acted and governed well and greatly, according to Christian principles and views, would, I think, furnish a far more complete idea of the true nature of the Christian state in this its first period of development, than any laboured or artificial definition. There are along with these individual characters, individual and transient periods of prosperity, which break out for one generation or more in the history of those early times; periods which can only be considered as historical exceptions from the general order of things. Even those more comprehensive, and so far more general political institutions, evidently peculiar to those Christian ages, and nowhere else to be found—like the truce of God, which repressed within certain limits the hereditary spirit of feud—or the spiritual chivalry in the orders of the Templars and of the Knights of St John, consecrated to warfare in the cause of God, and opening, as they did, in the time of the crusades, to the same spirit of chivalrous feud a higher path and a more noble career—all these political institutions, I say, springing out of the nature and exigencies of their age, can be understood only by a reference to the circumstances and prevailing spirit of the times, and must therefore be judged as historical peculiarities. As they often sprang up suddenly without a visible or apparent cause, and as if from some high, mysterious impulse, so they often sank again as rapidly; and the pure spirit, the true import of such institutions, appeared but for a moment like a silvery gleam; then they degenerated, or were transformed into something totally different. And we must not be astonished at this, since what is best and noblest in man—feeling, and its divine quality, is most easily and rapidly impaired, and may sometimes, indeed, preserve an external vigour, when it has undergone an internal change, and assumed a direction opposed to God and all goodness. There were also particular rulers possessed of an energetic will and a comprehensive understanding, who exercised a wide and



commanding, but pernicious influence on their age, and the world; and among these, the most noble were Barbarossa and that secret friend of the Saracens, the Emperor Frederick the Second; princes who with some others, must be regarded as the first authors of the great dissension. After this dissension had broken out in the fearful struggle of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, and Christendom was divided into two parties, discord became general, pursued its resistless course, and acting in those distracted times like some new destroying law of nature, absorbed all personality and its influence in the general abyss of error, or made it at least less conspicuous.

I will now endeavour to give a short sketch of the general progress of European society in this its first period of development, and to point out the then peculiar nature and constitution of the Christian state;—from that epoch when Charlemagne laid the first solid foundation for a permanent system of Christian government and Christian manners, down to the moment when an anti-Christian spirit of discord broke out with incurable violence, and became universally predominant. I will at the same time endeavour to take an historical survey of the whole Christian West, as it has remained the theatre of the subsequent progress of society, and of the great transactions of the world down to our times.

In the blame so commonly lavished, (and not unreasonably, when we consider the historical consequences,) on the customary divisions in the Frankish or Carlovingian empire, and the other German states, men forget that according to the old Germanic idea, a kingdom was nothing more than any other great family estate, or princely inheritance, and governed, like these, by the same law of descent. This was so from the earliest times among both the principal races of the Germans. In this manner we find the nation of the Goths divided into two kingdoms; and as the Saxons were with difficulty united under one head in their own ancestral country on the northern coast of Germany; so in the England which they had conquered and newly peopled, we find seven principalities or petty kingdoms of Anglo-Saxons co-existent with one another; and these were only by accident reduced to a less number, and but for a time blended into one sovereignty. We often ascribe to the men, and to the spirit of those times, pretensions quite inappropriate, inapplicable, and perfectly modern. So possessed are we with the notion of our

times as to the natural and eternal boundaries of this or that country, of the predestination of a people to political unity, or of the necessary national unity of every state—notions or prejudices which are held as so many mathematical axioms, in which we make the highest idea of policy to consist, to which we ascribe an inviolable sanctity, and which in our reverence, and in some cases, we might almost say—idolatry, we exalt above every thing else, and would make every thing else subservient to. To the simplicity of those ancient times, the excellence and advantages of a mild, domestic, paternal, national sovereignty for the more convenient administration of smaller states, appeared great, and superior to every other consideration. Thus those who had to decide of themselves, and without the imperious call of duty—without the feeling of a strong necessity for undertaking, even at the sacrifice of a part, at least, of their own national welfare, the heavy burden of the imperial office, in that Christian empire evidently established by Divine Providence for the protection of the church, and all the nations belonging to it ;—without this strong feeling of duty, I say, they never would have deviated from the good old simple usage of dividing the royal patrimony. The more so indeed as the glory they sought was rather of a chivalrous kind, consequently purely personal ; and that favourite idol of modern times—national vanity—was perfectly unknown to them. Their institution, certainly, would not be adapted to our times ; nor was it even suited to those immediately succeeding ; but an age to be judged aright and duly appreciated, must be estimated by its own standard, and the opinions proper to it. That even a division of sovereignty and partition of kingdoms is not incompatible with the external union of the body politic for one general design, so long as the potentates are animated by a Christian and brotherly feeling, and a spirit of union as to this one object—the all-uniting bond of confederacy ; is a truth which may be proved by many pleasing and glorious examples from the history of the earlier middle age, and from that of Germany especially. If, on the one hand, we would lay it down as a general historical law, and axiom of state, that separated or divided kingdoms and countries can never combine for one common object, nor remain permanently united in feeling or Christian equity—so, on the other hand, we must remember that the division of nations according to certain natural boundaries, which we would fain regard as the only

perfect and absolutely right one, is like the quadrature of the circle, a problem eluding all calculation, and remaining for ever insoluble, since each one, according to his peculiar political position, or national prejudices, views those eternal boundaries in a different light, and determines them differently. Thus in order to put an end to all discord and to the injurious system of partition, nothing would remain but the vulgar resource of a universal monarchy and military dominion—a resource which as often as it has been tried, has been as little justified or recommended by its historical results, as that custom of partition which prevailed in the German ancestral kingdoms of the earlier middle age.

The dangers of a bitter family feud, or of the mutual jealousies of the heirs to the several kingdoms as to their respective portions, when these grew to any considerable extent, were early enough perceived. It is to be observed, that in the first division of the great Carlovingian empire into three parts, designed by Charlemagne himself, but accomplished only under his feebler successor; the inheritance assigned to the eldest and imperial brother—Lothaire, was together with Rome and Italy, the Rhenish district situate between France on the one side, and the interior of Germany on the other, and extending from Switzerland to the sea—a district where the Romans had planted many and most flourishing colonies, and which for many ages back had been far superior in civilisation and refinement to the countries on either side. With the same prospective care, Charlemagne had already fixed his residence at Aix-la-Chapelle, preferring the Rhenish province as the then true seat of civilisation. But in the family quarrel and dissensions which ensued, this measure of Charlemagne as far as it was intended, had no other permanent effect than to cause, amid the partitions of countries and changes of dynasty, the continuance down to very modern times, of Lorraine as an independent kingdom or dutchy. The Rhenish district long preserved its pre-eminence in refinement above the rest of Germany; and with some external changes, was long the seat of empire.

In that dark old world of the north, on which Christianity was just beginning to dawn, no monarch after Charlemagne, shone so conspicuously as the virtuous Alfred, King of the West Saxons, in England. And the same remark is applicable



not only to him, but to England in general, which, during this first Christian period of modern history, far outshone all other countries in literature and science, as well as in religion, piety, and virtue. The great pope, St. Gregory, as I have already mentioned, laid the foundations of Christianity and intellectual refinement in England, whither he sent forty missionaries; and so active was their zeal and efficacious their influence, that in the succeeding age, this first school of Christianity in England sent forth to other countries the most eminent men of their time. Such were the German apostle and bishop, St. Boniface, and Alcuin, the learned friend and confidant of Charlemagne. Besides many Latin writers produced by this yet flourishing English school, the great Christian philosopher, Scotus Erigena, lived in England in the time of Alfred; and though this philosopher was perhaps not quite free from speculative error, he was far superior to his own age, and in the depth and originality of his conceptions, was not equalled, and certainly not surpassed for many succeeding centuries. King Alfred, who though a bard and a writer in his own native speech, prized equally the Latin literature, and who defended his country against the Danes with the most persevering valour, was the first founder of the English constitution; for with the wisdom and pacific spirit of a lawgiver, he restored the old Saxon rights and privileges, and the regulations relating to the cities and the different orders of the state. It was his virtuous courage, which in the most trying adversity, ever remained cool and collected, that alone rescued the isle of freedom from the fierce, impetuous power of the Danes.

The successful naval expeditions of the Normans to all the coasts of Europe, as far as Sicily and even beyond it, and the incursion of the Magiars into Europe, where they received the name of Hungarians, form in the ninth century the close, and are, as it were, the last reverberation, of the great immigration of the northern nations, and must on that account not be entirely passed over in silence. This last maritime migration from the north began with a powerful and enterprising ruler of Norway, the fair-haired Harold; and these naval expeditions which were undertaken, not merely from motives of vulgar piracy, or of martial adventure, but for the foundation and permanent settlement of new states, soon scoured all the coasts and regions of the Northern ocean, as well as of the Mediterranean sea. The

province in France which these freebooters conquered, the French acknowledged by the title of duchy of Normandy; and they were glad enough thus to bind it to their king by the homage of fealty, and attach it to, if not incorporate it with, their kingdom. Called to Naples and Sicily by the Greeks, who demanded their aid against the Saracens, the Normans there founded for themselves a kingdom of long duration. After Christianity had introduced into Denmark a better system of government and legislation, the powerful Danish monarch, Canute the Great, ruled over England during this period of the Norman sway; till at last, after a short interval of contest, another Norman, William the Conqueror, issuing from France, founded a new dynasty in England, and established on the basis of the old free Saxon constitution, a high chivalrous aristocracy.

From the remotest part of Eastern Asia, situate between the Uzi and the Patzinacites, an emigration of nations took a westward course towards the country of the Chazars, and at last led the nation of the Magiars from their original seat to Pannonia, where, according to the testimony of contemporary writers, the Avars, the descendants of the ancient Huns, still lived under their Chagan. Once excited into tumultuous activity, these Hungarians (who were still pagans) roved as far as the north of Italy, and down to Thessalonica in Greece, and to the very neighbourhood of Constantinople; they then advanced westward in large squadrons far into the interior of Germany, even to Saxony. It was here that the noble King Henry the First, opposed a vigorous resistance to their incursions, and Otho the Great put a final term to the progress of their arms by the victory on the banks of the Lech. Christianity, which was introduced into Hungary under Geisa, the father of King Stephen, established a milder system of manners and legislation; a system which St. Stephen, by a close union with Germany, brought to full maturity. At the same period, Poland under the happy influence of the Christian religion, which introduced here a better system of manners and legislation, was incorporated into the civilised community of the European nations, and with Germany in particular, formed a very close political connexion. It is particularly pleasing to observe the very beneficial influence of Christianity in the promotion of agriculture, and in the advancement of intellectual refinement in the northern valleys of Sweden, during the reigns of Olaus and St. Eric; when the

old hall of Odin at Upsal was finally destroyed, and the new religion obtained the victory.

During the period of the Norman glory, the Russians (a populous and widely-spread Sclavonian nation, inhabiting the vast and ancient Sarmatia, formerly governed by the Goths) called to their assistance the Varangians, who established a new dynasty at Novogorod. Either from this circumstance, or from the former dominion of the Goths, the country was by the neighbouring Finnish tribes afterwards called Gothland. Russia received Christianity at the hands of the Byzantines—and thus in its remote north, remained a stranger to the Catholic west—the more so, indeed, as the country, invaded and desolated by the Moguls, long groaned under the oppressive yoke of these barbarians—till at length, in very recent times, and in the very struggle of regeneration, it has grown up into a mighty power. Thus the whole circuit of the Christian west, and all the kingdoms it included, was now tolerably well filled up; and it then consisted of ten principal countries or nations; but in forming this estimate we must not attend to minuter subdivisions or mere national varieties, or to the frequent partitions of kingdoms, and alterations of territory, amid various conflicting or successive dynasties; but we should keep in view only the general and permanent outline of the European states. Germany and Italy, which were respectively the seats of the Christian empire and the papal dignity, formed the centre of Europe. Along with these two states, France and England were the most active, the most powerful, and the most influential members of the European commonwealth; while Spain was principally occupied with her own domestic contests against the Saracens. The Scandinavian countries were somewhat connected with the Germanic empire, and Poland and Hungary, after they had embraced Christianity, were united with that empire in the closest bonds. Lastly, in the far northern and eastern extremities of Europe, the Byzantine empire and the kingdom of the Muscovites (closely connected by the ties of religion), formed the extreme and remotest members of the Christian republic. Such was the geographical extent, and such the historical situation of Christendom at that period.

After the downfall of the Carlovingian family, the empire was restored to its pristine vigour by the election of the noble Conrad, Duke of the Franconians. This pious, chivalrous, wise, and valiant



monarch had to contend with many difficulties, and fortune did not always smile upon his efforts. But he terminated his royal career with a deed, which alone exalts him far above other celebrated conquerors and rulers, and was attended with more important consequences to after-times than have resulted from many brilliant reigns; and this single deed, which forms the brightest jewel in the crown of glory that adorns those ages, so clearly reveals the true nature of Christian principles of government, and the Christian idea of political power, that I may be permitted to notice it briefly. When he felt his end approaching, and perceived that of the four principal German nations, the Saxons alone, by their superior power, were capable of bringing to a successful issue the mighty struggle in which all Europe was at that critical period involved, he bade his brother carry to Henry, Duke of Saxony, hitherto the rival of his house, and who was as magnanimous as fortunate, the holy lance and consecrated sword of the ancient kings, with all the other imperial insignia. He thus pointed him out as the successor of his own choice, and in his regard for the general weal, and in his anxiety to maintain a great pacific power capable of defending the common interests of Christendom, he disregarded the suggestions of national vanity, and sacrificed even the glory of his own house. So wise and judicious, as well as heroic a sacrifice of all selfish glory, for what the interests of society, and the necessities of the times evidently demand, is that principle which forms the very foundation, and constitutes the true spirit of all Christian government. And by this very deed Conrad became, after Charlemagne, the second restorer of the Western Empire, and the real founder of the German nation; for it was this noble resolve of his great soul which alone saved the Germanic body from a complete dismemberment. The event fully justified his choice. The new King Henry, victorious on every side, laboured to build a great number of cities, to restore the reign of peace and justice, and to maintain the purity of Christian manners and Christian institutions; and prepared for his mightier son, the great Otho, the restoration of the Christian empire in Italy, whither the latter was loudly and unanimously called. This first age of the Saxon emperors was the happy period wherein Germany possessed the greatest power and resources, and enjoyed great internal peace and prosperity.

It is in this period, too, that we trace the first beginnings of mental refinement, in many excellent and remarkable productions of the Latin school, which were soon succeeded by the successful cultivation of the vernacular tongue. Quite as unhistorical, and even still more absurd than the reproaches urged against the Carlovingians for their impolitic partition of the empire, are those repeated lamentations and eternal regrets in which modern historians indulge, whenever they have occasion to notice the frequent expeditions of the German kings and emperors to Rome and Italy, and the connexion which subsisted between the German nation and the Christian Imperial Dignity—a connexion which these writers consider a great misfortune. They do not enter into the true idea of this dignity—they do not comprehend the urgent need of those times for an universal protectorate, which might, like a bulwark, defend Europe against internal anarchy, and the invasions of barbarous nations ; and which might prevent the light of Christianity from being perhaps extinguished in a second night of universal barbarism. The modern critics of those ancient times cannot understand that high Christian feeling—that exalted principle of self-devotion, whereby a nation from its internal strength and natural situation, was called by the general voice to take on itself this burden for the common weal, and to be the firm sustaining centre of the European system—a calling which must necessarily occasion a mighty loss and heavy sacrifice of repose and prosperity to the nation so undertaking the momentous charge. Without this firm central power, which held together the European nations, they would, yielding at the first shock, have succumbed under the attacks of the Mahometans or Moguls.

Without this central power, Europe would have been broken up into a multitude of petty states, and have sunk into eternal and irremediable anarchy ; whereas now, great as might be at times the confusion, and fearfully wild the spirit of warfare, there was always a resource and a remedy against such calamities. As the religious vow of the knight dignified his duties into a sort of ecclesiastical welfare ; so the high functions of the emperor were considered as partly ecclesiastical, and he was looked on as the sworn liegeman of Almighty God, intrusted with the high sword of universal justice. It was the exalted idea of this arduous and momentous charge, far more than

schemes of selfish ambition and idle glory, that filled up the lives of the most active and powerful of those ancient emperors. Hence this common regard for the general welfare of Christendom, which the obligations of their respective stations imposed upon them, produced a very intimate union between the heads of the spiritual and temporal authority in Europe, and placed them in a state of mutual dependence. When the mighty emperor, Otho the Great, had been called into Italy, and had witnessed with his own eyes the state of general corruption and degeneracy at Rome, where among the baronial factions which surrounded the papal chair, one of the more powerful families sought by the most culpable intrigues to obtain a lasting, and, as it were, hereditary possession of the holy see; he exerted his imperial authority, and deposed the pope, who by means so unlawful had obtained his dignity, and on whom the general voice of the age had long pronounced a sentence of condemnation, causing a worthier pontiff to be elected in his room. There still existed, among those of the same mind in Christendom, an unerring feeling whereby the righteousness or unrighteousness of any action, its real spirit and purpose, were easily and promptly determined without any anxious regard to mere outward forms. But when that uniformity of feeling had disappeared, and with it feeling itself had ceased to be a ruling principle of public and political life, the standard of political estimation rested almost exclusively on outward forms, and the contentious point of law involved in those forms; and as in every historical fact men saw but a precedent fertile of application, or even dangerous in its consequences, they no longer formed a pure historical judgment on the general spirit of any great action, and they almost lost the very notion of such a thing. The whole world at that time was unanimous in justifying the conduct of the great Otho in that affair. When, however, the clergy of Rome in their first feelings of gratitude and admiration at their deliverance from intolerable anarchy, and the toils of an unworthy family, conferred on the emperor the future and permanent power of choosing the pope, it might have been easily foreseen that so extended a prerogative, little compatible as it was with the independence of the church, would in the sequel provoke a strong reaction. This accordingly took place about a hundred years later, when a man of great energy of character, Pope Gregory VII. arose to reform the church, and achieve its independence



against the many unlawful encroachments of the secular power. And when a prince, distinguished indeed for his warlike qualities, but utterly characterless and animated with an unquiet spirit, who, according to the unanimous testimony of his contemporaries, had incurred many and most serious charges ; when this prince first attacked and deposed the pope, and the latter laid him under an excommunication, the conduct of the pontiff was not only in strict accordance with the general opinion of the age as to the mischievous rule of this secular potentate ; but was quite conformable to the then prevailing doctrine of public law, which sanctioned the responsibility and accountability of the temporal power. Hence, Henry IV. found it more expedient to loose himself from this excommunication by a feint submission, than to impugn it by open force ; although he never afterwards ceased persecuting the pope, whose constancy was proved in adversity and persecution. In our own times, justice has been at last rendered to the great qualities of this pontiff, and it has been allowed he was perfectly free from all selfish views, and that the austere and decisive energy of his character sprang from no other motive than a burning zeal for the reform of the church and of mankind. The German historians in particular, and in truth, those on the Protestant side, have been the first to perform this act of justice ; and the name of Gregory VII., who lived in times so different from our own, has long ceased to be with the Germans a watch-word for party-strife.

But on the matter at issue, or rather on the opinion the world then entertained respecting it, it will be necessary to say a few words. That the sovereign is in no way responsible, seems in modern times to be considered an immutable axiom, or rather the first of all axioms in the science of government ; and whenever a monarch in the history of the middle ages, however vicious he may be, and however forgetful of his dignity, meets with the treatment of the Emperor Henry IV., political indignation is raised to the highest pitch. No one can have the slightest intention of questioning the perfect justness of the above state-axiom under certain given circumstances. But, if the question be a parallel between the middle ages and modern times, we may oppose to the scandal of the ecclesiastical excommunication pronounced against this prince during the former period, the still more fatal example which has occurred within

the last three centuries, of the public execution of several monarchs, and of the assassination of many others. Thus in this respect, the history of the middle age stands purer ; and this warns us to decide with less precipitancy on the superiority of our own standard of political morality, and on the greater perfection of modern principles of state-policy.\* According to the feeling

\* In confirmation of what Schlegel asserts in the text, I shall cite a few passages from some distinguished Protestant historians of Germany. To show my readers the enlarged, liberal, and enlightened views taken by the Protestant writers of that country on the political influence of the papacy in the middle age, and on the services which at that momentous period the hierarchy rendered to the cause of social order, liberty, and civilisation, it were easy to transcribe matter more than sufficient to fill a volume. Let a few examples suffice.—“The northern nations,” says the celebrated historian of Switzerland, John Muller, “rushing in upon the most beautiful countries of Europe, trampling under foot, or disturbing and convulsing all social institutions, menaced the whole western world with a barbarism similar to that which, under the Ottoman sceptre, has obliterated every thing good, great, and beautiful that ancient Greece and Asia had produced. Yet the bishops and other dignitaries (Vorsteher) of the church, strong in their authority, contrived to impose a restraint on those giants of the north who, as regards intelligence, were but children. They would not have been more successful than the Greek prelates, had they been subject to four different patriarchs. The popes of Rome (whose primitive history is as obscure and defective as that of the ancient Roman republic, since we know little of the first popes, except that they devoted their lives for the faith, as Decius had done for his country), the popes, we say, employed their authority with the same address which we admire in the ancient senate, to render their see independent, subject to its immediate action the whole western hierarchy, and establish its sway, far beyond the boundaries of the ancient empire, on the ruins of the northern religions. Thus whoever refused to honour the Christ, trembled before the pope ; and one faith and one church were preserved in Europe, amid the breaking up and subdivision of the newly-founded kingdoms into a thousand petty principalities. We know what pope made Charlemagne the first emperor ; *but who made the first pope ?* The pope, they say, was only a bishop ; yes, but at the same time, the *Holy Father*, the *Sovereign Pontiff*, the great Caliph (as he was called by Ho-Albufreda, Prince of Hamath), of all the kingdoms and principalities, of all the lordships and cities of the West. It is he who controlled, by the fear of God, the stormy youth of our modern states. At present even, when his authority is no longer formidable, he is still very puissant by the benedictions which he showers ; he is still an object of veneration to innumerable hearts, honoured by the kings who honour the nations, invested with a power, before which in the long succession of ages, from the Cæsars to the House of Hapsburg, a host of nations and all their great names have vanished.

“We declaim against the pope ! as if it were such a misfortune that

of right, and the prevailing maxims of public law in that age, a mutual control and responsibility subsisted between church and state, and between the heads of either. In the most esteemed constitutions of modern states, there is also a mutual dependence and possible control. Thus the prince may dissolve the parliament, or resist its enactments by his veto ; and, on the other hand, the parliament, by withholding its sanction to the imposition of taxes, or refusing the grant of subsidies, may weaken the sinews of government, and summon, not indeed the king, who seems to be regarded as a mere cipher, but the ministry to a most severe reckoning. The government looses all stay and support, when the opposition obtains a permanent and decided majority. Whether this mutual dependence and control in the modern theory of government be less dangerous than in the ancient system, is a question which it is not so easy to decide. As all the institutions of the middle age had a religious spirit and character, it cannot excite our surprise that this opposition

there should exist an authority to superintend the practice of Christian morality, and to say to ambition and to despotism, 'Halt !—so far, and no further ! *Bisher, und nicht weiter !*' " So speaks the illustrious John Muller. The celebrated Herder allows "that without the hierarchy, Europe in all probability had become the prey of tyrants, the theatre of eternal wars; or even a desert."

"The hierarchy," says Beck, "opposed the progress of despotism in Europe, preserved the elements of civilisation, and upheld in the recollection of men what is so easily effaced—the ties which bind earth to Heaven. Those ignorant men, as we affect to call them, have settled almost all the countries of Europe. The fruits of that time are the formation of the third estate, whence dates the true existence of nations and the establishment of cities, wherein social life and true liberty were developed."—*Beck on the Middle Age*, page 13. *Leipzig*, 1824.

"The weak," says Ruhs, in his *Manual of the History of the Middle Age*, "then found in spiritual authority a better protection against the encroachments of the powerful, than afterwards in the balance of power—a system which, as it was *a thing purely abstract, devoid of all external guarantee*, must soon have lost all influence. The pope was always present to terminate the wars which had broken out among Christian princes, and to protect the people against the injustice and tyranny of their rulers. The clergy, therefore, everywhere showed themselves opposed to the power of kings, when the latter wished to become perfectly absolute—they wished not to domineer over them, but confine them within the legitimate bounds of their authority. The priesthood was, consequently, always for princes, when powerful vassals attacked the rights of the sovereign—they were the natural and constant guardians of the rights and liberty of all classes."—*Manual of the History of the Middle Age*. 1816.—*Trans.*



between the spiritual and temporal power, and this mutual dependence of the heads of church and state should have been founded in religion, and in the religious character and purpose of the imperial, as well as of the papal, dignity. It was only by the excesses of passion and violence, by the exaggerated proceedings of both the spiritual and temporal powers, as well as by unfortunate accidents and a human imperfection, by no means inherent in the nature of the thing itself, that the dispute between church and state grew to such a fearful magnitude, was so prolonged, and often became almost incurable. But how easily, even then, peace might be restored between the spiritual and temporal powers by the wisdom, the prudence, the goodwill, and conciliatory temper of both, is proved by the peaceable termination of the quarrel respecting investiture under the successor of Henry IV. In the sequel, indeed, the harsh, stern, inflexible character of the Ghibelline emperors, especially Barbarossa, again perplexed this question ; when from the contest growing more and more violent betwixt Guelfs and Ghibellines, the political schism became wider and wider, and discord seemed to be again the mistress of the world.

END OF LECTURE XIII.

## LECTURE XIV.

On the Struggles of the Guelfs and Ghibellines—Spirit of the Ghibelline Age—Origin of Romantic Poetry and Art—Character of the Scholastic Science and the Old Jurisprudence—Anarchical State of Western Europe.

THE most rapid sketch of the history of the middle age, if it contained but a few lively, characteristic, and faithful traits on a subject inexhaustible in itself, would suffice to convince any reasonable man that great characters (abounding almost more than in any other period of history), important interests, mighty motives, and lofty feelings and ideas, were there in mutual collision; and that in what is called the anarchy of the middle age, we find an active and stirring life, the most splendid feats of heroism, and many luminous traces of a higher power. The most careful consideration and profound investigation of the history of those ages, invariably discovers, that all that was then great and good in the state, as well as in the church, proceeded from Christianity, and from the wonderful efficacy of religious principles. Whatever was imperfect, defective, and hurtful, belonged not to that moral principle which animated society, and which was itself the best, the noblest, and the soundest; but was in the character of men, we might almost say in the character of the age itself, which, though perhaps not originally and purposely selfish, had yet become so in the violence of the conflict. And by selfishness, I do not precisely understand a vulgar self-interest, or an ordinary ambition, but that absolute will or conduct which springs from some unalterable resolution, which, hurrying from one extreme to another, is sure to produce a perpetual alternation of extreme measures. In some cases, this conduct proceeded from a want of penetration, prudence, and steadiness, which did not always accompany the deeds of heroic enthusiasm, the astonishing energy of will and strength of character which distinguished

the men of those ages. The principle then really bad, the principle hostile to good, must be ascribed to that inclination to discord innate in man, or which, at least, has become his second nature—an inclination which, when united with those other mighty qualities of the age, assumed, indeed, the most formidable shape.

The whole middle age, however, must not by any means be depicted as a period of universal anarchy ; as, from the great difference of times, and the fact that much in the manners and political institutions of those ages is now scarcely intelligible, modern writers are but too apt to indulge in this strain of censure. Above all, we must be careful to distinguish in the history of the middle ages the variety of epochs. As long as those religious principles on which church and state depended, were maintained in their unity and integrity, the social stability of that first and happier period is indeed remarkable, and forms a striking contrast with the succeeding age. For private feuds, restrained within certain bounds by the manners of chivalry and the laws of honour, or the more protracted, and frequently renewed struggles of a warlike nation to repel the inroads of barbarians, or the aggressions of turbulent neighbours, are no adequate proofs of general anarchy. But a full knowledge and just appreciation of the power of principle, which during that better period was the Christian foundation of the state, is of so much more importance to our age, as in these times when principle has given way to the mutable opinion of the moment, and the latter exerts so mighty an influence on public life ; though men have the power to throw off this usurped dominion, they will not return to that unity and stability of principle, however strongly they may feel the necessity of restoring its saving influence. No parallel could be more profitable and instructive than the comparison between an age and a state, where principle was predominant, and another where opinion was paramount.

All that was great and good in the history of the middle age, as I observed at the commencement of this lecture, existed only in fragments, and this has very much contributed to heighten the appearance of anarchy throughout the whole of this great period of human history. Of this the blame must be sought for in a combination of many injurious causes, and in the resistance of many opposing elements. That wonderful power of regeneration, by which the whole of western Chris-



tendom, after every mighty destruction, and reign of confusion in church and state, has, in a form somewhat modified, sprung up anew, renovated and exalted, can be ascribed only to that religion which was in Christian countries the first, and for so many centuries the apparently almost indestructible support of the social edifice. In many and memorable periods of regeneration, down to our own times, this truth has been repeatedly manifested; unless perhaps this self-renovating power conspicuous in the progress of Christian Europe, as well as of the particular nations composing it, languishing and decaying by degrees, become at last utterly extinct.

Among the characteristic, remarkable, and peculiarly Christian institutions of the middle age, we ought especially to mention that ecclesiastical truce, or peace of God, which, towards the commencement of the eleventh century, opposed a powerful barrier to the growing and restless spirit of private warfare. Without its being possible to specify exactly how or where this institution first arose, it was at once proclaimed in several places, and generally received with pious faith, as a voice of reconciliation from above, an immediate revelation and benign dispensation of divine Providence; and every week the tolling of the bell announced the sacred truce from Wednesday evening to Monday morning, during which time all feuds were to subside, and all hostilities to cease. It may indeed here be asked in the spirit of modern times, why were only four, and not the whole seven days of the week fixed upon, for the cessation of disorder? And it may be further said that a severe criminal code, and a prompt, vigorous, and enlightened administration of the law, would have rendered such expedients unnecessary. And it is thus that men speak and reason without any knowledge of that age; for many feuds, troubles, and contests then existed, as in all ages have existed and still exist, which no criminal legislation can reach: and who will not deem it the part of prudence and a real gain, when peace is not attainable, to obtain at least a safe and honourable armistice, or to subtract from the principle of war four-sevenths of its baneful influence and actual duration? And how happy would men have accounted themselves, if, in other and later times of disorder, when nought was revered or respected, and every thing sacred was an object of hatred and persecution, they could, amid the general confusion, have found shelter

under such a wall of safety, or been blessed with such a holiday of peace, though only at particular times of the week ! We should rather admire the power of religion, whereby such a prohibition without the aid of external force, or secular authority, and running directly counter to the ruling passion of the age, was received with such pious faith, and followed with such humble docility.

In the first crusade, religious feeling and enthusiasm was the great spring of action ; and in the outset, at least, it was far more the glowing eloquence of Peter the Hermit, his affecting description of the Holy Land, and of the holy places groaning under the Saracen yoke, which contributed to bring about this memorable expedition, than the pretended policy of the popes for causing the depression of regal power, and the promotion of popular freedom. These mighty consequences, though in fact historically true, became apparent only at a much later period, and so far from being preconceived, were then not even foreseen. As the first crusade occurred in the most brilliant period of Norman glory, the Norman heroes, especially those from France, took a very active and prominent part in it. The warfare which the Saracens waged against Christendom, was considered (and then, perhaps, not without reason,) as a state of permanent and universal hostility. The chivalrous and defensive wars of Christian nations against the unbelievers, were looked upon in the same light ; and if we may judge from posterior events, Jerusalem and Egypt, in that long and memorable contest between Europe and Asia, could very well be regarded, both in a military and political point of view, as the bulwarks of Christendom. Feats of prodigious, and almost incredible, heroism were achieved in the Holy Land ; and, at the close of the eleventh century, the victorious cross was planted in the holy city, and the pious Christian hero, Godfrey, proclaimed King of Jerusalem, though this title, as suited only to the divine Son of David, he with all humility renounced.

In this holy city the first two spiritual orders of chivalry sprang up ; the knights of St. John, who took up arms for the defence of pilgrimage, and in their vows combined the care of the sick pilgrims with the management of the sword ; and the Templars, so called after the Temple of Solomon, and from a recollection of the remarkable secrets con-

nected with that edifice. Chivalrous institutions of this kind, wherein Christianity contrived to blend the most opposite qualities and inclinations of human nature, could not have sprung up under a mathematical government of reason, or in a state where every thing is reduced to the level of a dead uniformity, and general equality, and where all feeling and personality are effaced. But the voice of ages has decided completely in favour of these marvellous institutes, and even in our own times, amid all the changes and fluctuations of opinion, they have preserved the respect, and obtained the forbearance, of mankind.

Even in the second crusade which took place about fifty years later, when the new progress of the Saracen arms appeared to threaten the safety of the holy city, it was far more the pious eloquence of St. Bernard than any scheme or calculation of policy, which set the whole European world in motion. The number of warriors and armed pilgrims who, under the guidance of the Emperor Conrad, and the King of France, poured in upon the Holy Land, is computed at more than half a million. The religious enthusiasm and chivalric heroism which formed the sole and animating principle of the whole enterprise, were not always accompanied with sufficient prudence, wisdom, and circumspection. The want of these qualities at least, as regarded the influences of climate, the physical wants of so vast an army, and a geographical knowledge of localities; is too often apparent; and in default of this necessary foresight and preparatory information, many thousands perished in the second as well as in the first crusade; a fate which indeed is not unfrequent in wars, where great bodies of people are exposed to toil and hardship in a foreign climate. These expeditions were indeed like new migrations of nations, which took an opposite direction from the first, and rolled backward from Europe towards ancient Asia. The great multitude of men engaged, would sufficiently account for these memorable expeditions, as it proves the redundancy of population in Europe, which sought on this occasion, and by means of this kind, to disburden itself of its surplus numbers. And if this numerous population may have given rise to, or afforded materials for, turbulence and anarchy, still, on the other hand, it furnishes a proof that that anarchy was not of so destructive and depopulating a nature, as the descriptions of modern historians would sometimes lead us to suppose.



The real point of transition in German history from good to evil,—from those Christian principles which were ever predominant in the earlier period, to the unappeasable contests of the Guelfs and Ghibellines in the later middle age, must be fixed in the reign of the Emperor Frederick the First. The hostile treatment of the old Saxon race, the destruction of that first and greatest of the old national duchies of the Germans, was occasioned by the jealousy of the East Franconians under the dynasty of that race; and this measure, begun during the reign, (in every respect so mischievous) of Henry the Fourth, who thus became chargeable with this mighty injustice towards the whole German nation, was now brought to a head by the Emperor Barbarossa. And thus, with the most signal ingratitude, was cut off by the root that noble stem whence German glory and German power had sprung; for the reigns of the great Saxon emperors form precisely the most prosperous and most brilliant period of German history, such indeed as has never been again witnessed. With the same unrelenting severity and atrocious cruelties, this Ghibelline emperor destroyed the confederate cities of Lombardy, and with them crushed the fair plant of Italian civilisation just then beginning to blossom.

These two great historical parties—the Guelfs and Ghibellines, are the same which we meet with in other periods of history, and even in our own times, though under other names, often in a form very different from that of the present day, and not always in the same relative position towards each other; but in the middle age they appeared in the larger and more gigantic proportions of the vigorous, heroic character belonging to that epoch. There is ever the one party aspiring after greater freedom, and the other immovably attached to the ancient faith, and to the principles it inculcates. That the liberal principles of innovation should, according to the peculiar complexion which these opinions take in every age, have emanated even from imperial power, and should have sought to establish their dominion in the world by force of arms, is not improbable in itself; and examples of a like kind are not wanting in history. And in this shape we find these principles in the middle age, where for a long while they exerted the greatest influence, and at last became almost predominant. On the other hand the legitimate attachment to the old permanent principle of faith appeared here in the form of an

ecclesiastical opposition to secular ascendancy. But in the time of Barbarossa, the solemn reconciliation which took place between this emperor and the pope, restored harmony between the heads of church and state, and at last composed the long feud. This powerful emperor, accompanied by the king of France, and the lion-hearted Richard, undertook a new crusade, in order to deliver Jerusalem which had been wrested from the Christians by Saladin; but before he could accomplish his design, death terminated his active career.

Although the last Ghibelline emperor, Frederick the Second, had been educated by Pope Innocent III., a pontiff distinguished by his enlarged views, and great intellectual endowments, and who had undertaken the care and guardianship of the emperor's childhood; yet the old dispute broke out again under this monarch with more violence and more implacable animosity than ever. This quarrel was never more appeased, at least during the sway of Frederick II. and his family; and it terminated only with the downfall of the Hohenstaufen, the most powerful of all the princely houses of the middle age. Yet the Ghibelline name, heretofore stamped in characters of blood upon the earth, subsisted a long while yet; and for ages after, the Ghibelline spirit continued to be the prevailing one in Europe. Although the later Swabian princes and emperors of this house, such as Henry VI. and others, were the patrons of poetry, and of the Provençal minstrels and German Minnesingers; yet they all resembled one another in an unbending sternness of character. Henry VI. perpetrated the most enormous cruelties at Naples; the blood-thirsty Ezzelin, while governor of Lombardy, under Frederick the Second, has left behind him so fearful a recollection in Italy, such a character in the pages of history, that his very name need only be mentioned, and will dispense with all minuter historical details. The last of this family, Conrâdin, was an innocent victim of the public hatred borne to his ancestors, and he perished on a scaffold at Naples by the hands of Charles of Anjou, the brother of St. Lewis, who had seized on the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the lawful patrimony of the royal youth. The Emperor Frederick the Second—a prince who for his times had received a most polite education, and was endowed with the greatest and most original powers of mind—was not only accused by the pope in the excommunication he pronounced against him

of a secret but decided enmity to the Christian religion ; but in the general opinion of the world, laboured under the same suspicion. However, by a prudent peace, which this prince concluded with the Sultan of Egypt, he terminated his crusade more successfully than his grandfather had done his own ; for by this he won back the holy places, and placed the crown of Jerusalem on his head. He was the first who brought into Europe the Arabic translation of Aristotle's works ; and as at this period a mighty change took place in the science and philosophy of the middle age, and as even the art and poetry of European nations began to display new life and energy, it may not be amiss to give here a rapid sketch of these important changes, as they serve to characterise the times.

Chivalry was in itself the poetry of life ; what wonder then that that life of imagination, should have opened a new fountain of poesy in the traditional songs, the fairy lays, the varied minstrelsy, and knightly narratives of Germany and France, Spain and England, since in these countries, chivalry was the ruling element of society, and had made the greatest progress ?—For the more immediate object of this Philosophy of History,—and in order to contemplate the progress of mankind in matters more serious and important, I have thought the moral principles of men in the middle age, and their political doctrines, as they were founded on religion, or on the system of opposition to religion, to be of far greater moment and importance than the mere æsthetic part of those ages ; for sentimentalists may indulge in a certain vague, superficial love and predilection for the times chivalry, for the romantic spirit of the chivalrous life, and of the chivalrous poetry, and of the whole system of modern art which has thence emanated ; and nevertheless, all the deeper problems of life involved in that momentous epoch may remain unexamined, unsolved, or even misunderstood.

On the nature of this romantic tendency, inasmuch as it exerted a mighty influence on life, and was a motive of vast and undoubted weight in many of the most important historical events of those ages, I shall merely say a word by way of psychological illustration ; for this is applicable to the prevailing forms of mind, the peculiar intellectual bearings of whole nations and ages, as to those of individuals. As where opinion is the ruling principle of life—it is very soon broken, divided,



parcelled out, and lost in a chaos of heterogeneous theories, and the age, the world, life itself, are involved in interminable disputes; so, when religious feeling constitutes the primary principle of life, and it hath been dismembered, and torn from its right centre, been driven to some extreme, and opinions flowing from this source have been carried into action, then all the great transactions of public life exhibit that overruling influence of imagination, perceptible not in the earlier, but in the later periods of the middle age, especially from the great epoch of the Crusades. Although these and other like great historical events of that period bear many noble traces of the high religious source whence they sprang, yet such a paramount influence of imagination over real life, must in this partial excess be regarded as the consequence of the dismemberment of man's psychological powers—a symptom of the dissolution of that internal harmony which can never subsist in society, unless it be previously established in consciousness. The radical vice of the middle age—that is to say, the one most prevalent in its later period from the time of the Ghibellines, if one may venture to characterise it with such psychological generality, is discernible in the productions of the poetry, art, and science of that age. And the relations which these bore to society—the distinctive character, the peculiar spirit of this critical period in the progress of Christian nations, are matters of the highest interest and greatest moment. This vice consisted in that disposition to extremes, that leaning towards the absolute I have already spoken of, as manifested in will, in determination, in rule, or in science, speculation, and poetry. The first germ, or at least the first disposition to this fault, lies in the very origin of modern nations, especially those five whose political existence sprang out of the union of the Germanic constitution, manners, and character, with the Latin civilisation, literature, and language in the Romanic countries; or which, at least, were formed by a very strong infusion of the Roman spirit—I mean the German and English, the French, Spanish, and Italian nations. Where the character of the German tribes, the free, heroic energy of Germanic nature, was blended and incorporated with the strong worldly sense of the Romans by the influence of Christian principles and religious love; there sprang out of that happy union those great and mild characters to which I have already

drawn your attention, and which flourished during the first period of the German empire, and of the middle age. But as soon as the influence of the Christian religion began to decline, and its power was enfeebled, clouded, or obscured, the two elements, which had been united in the human race, fell asunder; and on one side was to be seen nothing but mere Roman astuteness (as is often enough the case in the later history of France and Italy), and on the side of the Germanic nations, nothing but a rude martial impetuosity and chivalric pride, uncontrolled and unsoftened by the principle of religion. Or when, again, the rigid principles of that old worldly sense and instinct of dominion, which belonged to the Romans, were conjoined with the heroic energy of the north, without, however, the healing and conciliatory influence of the religion of love; this combination, which is conspicuous in the vehement, but fearful characters engaged in the Ghibelline contests, was, indeed the most unfortunate of all.

How the tendency towards the absolute—that abyss to mankind, which, along with love, confounds and swallows up all life—then hurried the political world from one extreme to another, we have already mentioned, so far as was necessary for our object.

But even in the art and poetry, as well as the science of the middle age, this leaning towards the absolute is equally apparent, and the more so, as both reached their full maturity at that period only when this had become the ruling spirit of the age. As, on one hand, the chivalrous poetry, especially in its origin, was excessively fantastical, until later it was fashioned into a form of milder symmetry, and made to pour forth the touching, heart-felt tones of romantic art; so, on the other hand, the scholastic philosophy was bewildered in a maze of subtleties not so much metaphysical as merely logical, and often quite destitute of sense. The singular manner, indeed, in which the Italian poet Dante, has in his mighty poem of visions, wherein he displays the most masterly and classical condensation of language, and the profoundest poetical art, contrived to sustain in his progress through the three regions of the invisible world, that fantastic spirit (which was not confined to the chivalrous poetry, but was common to every department of imagination in that age), next the stern maxim of the Ghibelline state policy, and a congenial worship of Roman antiquity, and has managed to unite

all these qualities with the subtle distinctions of the scholastic philosophy; this singular manner, indeed, has never been an object of general imitation, nor has it opened a path to the subsequent labours of art. But this work will ever remain an extraordinary, wonderful, and characteristic monument, wherein the peculiar spirit of this first scholastico-romantic epoch of European art and science is displayed in a most remarkable manner. In this spirit there were many heterogeneous elements, not confined to their separate and distinct spheres, but often in the strangest juxta-position, or rather confusion. And thus a regular scholastic science of love, with all the borrowed forms of the philosophy of the day, formed often the purport of the most tender romantic lays or devices; and logical antitheses, syllogisms, and subtleties, were solved in rhyme and verse, with a most charming play of fancy. It is these vagaries (and so they are in many respects) which so captivate our feelings in the poetry of Petrarch—one of the restorers of ancient literature and of modern learning.

More strongly still than in its poetry, the richness of an inventive imagination displayed itself in the wonderful architecture of the middle age, as so many splendid monuments in Germany, England, a part of France, and in the north of Italy and Venice can attest. The style of the Byzantine churches was the first and principal model of this Gothic architecture, though a fantastic monument of Arabic architecture may here and there perhaps have had some influence in its formation. The elaborate and ornate style, and the fantastic singularity of this architecture, breathe the true spirit of the German middle age. At this time, painting, too, began to make some progress in Italy and Germany; though its progress was incomparably slower than that of architecture, and the art reached its perfection only in the fifteenth century; but devoted entirely to religious subjects and consecrated to the use of churches or private devotion, painting remained, down to the time of Raphael, an art peculiarly Christian, and displayed the profoundest import and the most masterly power. From this period, renouncing, for the most part, the religious character of the elder Christian painting, art began to be affected by that enthusiasm for the pagan antique, which indeed was not limited to the fine arts, but was the prevailing character of literature and science in this second period of European culture. And I have made these few



remarks, not so much for the sake of art itself, which would require a separate investigation, but as tending to elucidate the various epochs and stages in the progress of modern civilisation.

It was an ill-boding gift that the Ghibelline emperor made to Europe when he brought from the East the works of Aristotle, translated, or rather burlesqued, into Arabic, and thence turned again into Latin, till at last they became often perfectly unintelligible. The elder Christian philosophers belonging to the first period of the middle age, such as in England (which still retained a high pre-eminence in Latin literature and Christian science), a Scotus Erigena, the contemporary of Alfred,—a St. Anselm, so highly revered in theology,—and afterwards in France, an Abelard, and also a St. Bernard, in whose eloquence there runs so pure a vein of piety—and so charming a mysticism of feeling—all these elder Christian philosophers, both in thought and language were incomparably clearer and more precise than the schoolmen of succeeding times, and were for the most part entirely free from that interminable play of an idle logic, and those empty metaphysical subtleties. The natural sciences were then in too low and feeble a state to form any distinct branch of human inquiry; and this very circumstance contributed, as was then indeed perfectly natural, to knit closer the ties which connected philosophy with theology. But independently of the peculiar circumstances of those times, it is evident that Christian philosophy can be founded on religion only, and not on any theory, wherein nature occupies the first and highest place—not on any doctrine, which contains the germ of a pagan worship of nature, renewed under a scientific form. As little can a Christian philosophy rest on the principle of individualism—a reason which submits not humbly to God and his revelation, but which, all concentrated in itself, aspires to be all-sufficing and all-creative. In either respect, the Stagyrte, when studied even in the original, and thoroughly understood, would have been a guide very unsafe, very likely to mislead, as well in natural philosophy as in the higher problems of metaphysics. The best and most instructive of his writings, his ethical or political works, could not even be understood by those scholastic admirers of the Grecian sage; for the profound allusions they contained to the customs and political history of Greece made the knowledge of these, and a complete investigation of the original sources of information, absolutely neces-

sary to their comprehension. Even his logical and rhetorical books derive their chief and liveliest interest from the fact that they were intended to remedy the dialectic malady of Grecian intellect, and to oppose the all-usurping influence of a false rhetoric among the Greeks. Lastly, to comprehend fully, rightly appreciate, and turn to advantage, as our times are enabled to do, the most solid works of the profound ancient—those on mixed physics and natural history, the schoolmen were entirely destitute of the necessary aids and preparatory information.

If the Christian philosophers of the middle age, instead of adopting the Aristotelian system, had built and improved on the philosophy of those first great original thinkers of Christian Europe already mentioned, or on the philosophy of the primitive fathers, even those of the Latin church, for by them also the Platonic doctrines (the only doctrines of antiquity at all reconcileable with a philosophy of revelation) had long been planted and naturalised on the Christian soil;—if this had been the case, the edifice of Christian philosophy would have been raised with far greater ease and rapidity, and been wrought into a much more beautiful structure. Or if even the Greek originals had been deemed absolutely indispensable towards such an object, it had been better that, instead of waiting till the destruction of Constantinople, the powerful emperors and potentates, who patronised art and science, had, during the short duration of the Latin empire at Constantinople, brought away with them those philological treasures, instead of the works of Aristotle so absurdly disfigured in the Arabic, and in the still more unintelligible Latin version. It was, on one hand, the inclination of the age to absolute modes of thinking, to the art of logical tournaments, and on the other, a hope, secretly entertained, that by the pretended magical power of these logical devices, one might learn and obtain the mastery of many profound secrets of nature (which by the way should have been sought anywhere but in the real Aristotle); finally, the unquenchable thirst after a fruit of knowledge, deemed forbidden—it was all these circumstances which created now that universal and irresistible rage for Aristotle, reputed as he was to contain the very essence of all liberal science and philosophy.

The whole foundation of the scholastic philosophy was

thoroughly and essentially false; and it had the most prejudicial and injurious influence, not only on theology, but on the whole spirit and modes of thinking of this age. When, however, the evil appeared nearly incurable, and the false current of opinion was too strong to be resisted, a mighty service was rendered to mankind, when acute and sagacious theologians, endowed with philosophical talents and discernment, like a St. Thomas Aquinas, adopting the common, but erroneous, basis of this old Aristotelian rationalism, founded on it a system in which they attempted to reconcile this philosophy with the dictates of faith, and thus, in this respect at least, avert from their age the dangerous consequences of this false direction of the human mind. Yet, on the whole, this was but an apparent reconciliation; and the scholastic philosophy, or in other words, the rationalism of the middle age, broke out often afterwards into a haughty and violent opposition to the doctrines of revelation.

This scholastic spirit of the now degenerate middle age exerted its pernicious influence on life itself, and on the sciences more immediately connected with life, particularly jurisprudence. For when the first Ghibelline Frederick, on the plains of Roncaglia, gave his solemn sanction to the Roman law, and to all those absolute rights and prerogatives of the crown which were thence to be deduced, he thereby opened a door to an intricate scholastic jurisprudence, to all the learned subtlety of processes, and the interminable logic of law; and conferred on mankind a boon as little propitious as the Arabic Aristotle, which his descendant, the second Frederick, afterwards brought into Europe. The vast pandects of Justinian were already the recognised code of laws, under the Eastern Franconian emperors, long before the German jurist, Irnerius, opened his school of civil law in the University of Bologna. Those old Roman formulas of universal dominion which are occasionally to be found in the "Corpus Juris," suited perfectly the spirit and policy of the Ghibelline emperors, who, in, particular cases, alleged them against the Greek emperors and other potentates, as clear proofs of the universal monarchy which appertained to them. But it was particularly from the Ghibelline period that the Roman law became a favourite science, and its study a new mania among the European nations, especially on account of



the leaning to absolute principles in that system of jurisprudence, whose artificial forms of rigid law were indeed little congenial to the spirit of Christianity, to modern society, and German manners.

The true problem for the legal science of Christian Europe to solve would have been this—to adopt the forms of the old Roman jurisprudence, so highly wrought and finished in its way, and to reform its spirit by the doctrines and principles of Christian justice; and at the same time to employ the many excellent materials to be found in the native laws of European nations, and in all the old Germanic codes. These laws were indeed of a very local nature, adapted mostly to infant communities and the simple manners of warlike tribes, and by no means appropriate to a more advanced stage of civilisation; yet they contained the solid substance of genuine freedom and exalted equity. But this task ought to have been accomplished in that earlier period when Christianity, which had united and harmonised so many discordant elements, had still retained all its influence—an influence which was afterwards wanting. Those ages, however, which were so thoroughly Christian, and on that very account of such political importance, were deficient in science; and hence, as I have already observed, it was not so much deliberate selfishness, or hostile opposition, but the real want of knowledge and foresight which occasioned the civil and political institutions of Christian states to be left imperfect. It is only in very recent times that an attempt has been made to solve problem which earlier ages had left unexecuted, or to supply this old deficiency of a Christian system of jurisprudence. And if hitherto this task has never been adequately, or completely, accomplished, though all the conditions have long existed for the solution of this necessary problem of European society; it would not be right to defer again the execution of the work, and thus lose once more the seasonable moment.

How, after the struggle of parties had become more general, and an absolute mode of thinking the ruling character of the age, the violent contests between church and state, between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities tended to promote their mutual injury and destruction, I shall now endeavour briefly to state. After the last excommunication pronounced against

Frederick II., one anti-emperor had followed another in succession ; and German princes, a prince of the royal household of England, and a king of Castile, had filled successively the imperial throne ; none were generally and legally recognised, and it was the reign of universal anarchy and savage club-law. It was a dark interregnum in social order, as if the sun of justice and of peace had withdrawn its light from a world of corruption and irreconcilable hate ; and for a whole generation this state of wild disorder, and fear of still greater calamities, lasted. The loss of Jerusalem and all the Holy Land to the Christians, which now took place, added to the general gloom of the times.

In vain had St. Lewis in his last crusade against Egypt, once more exerted all his energies for the deliverance and preservation of the Christian possessions in the East ; possessions, which had they been retained, might in the end have formed a rampart and a barrier against the inroads of the Mussulman power into the adjoining provinces of Europe. Still the danger from this quarter was not so imminent ; for it was not till a hundred years later that the Turks burst from Asia Minor into Europe, conquered the northern provinces of the Byzantine empire, and began to menace the Christian kingdoms of the West. But there was a nearer and mightier danger rolling on against Europe—the formidable power of the Moguls, which surprised it in this period of the great interregnum. As if the hostile spirit of destruction had anticipated or known that the power of Christendom could be subverted only by internal discord ; an old sage or priest of the still pagan Moguls, had, about a generation before, announced to the youth, who was afterwards called Zingis Khan, (that is to say, Lord of the World, and who is known by this name in history,) that in a vision, he had seen the Great Spirit, seated on his flaming throne, judge the nations of the earth, and that by his decision, the dominion of the world had been allotted to the young Khan of the Moguls. Filled with this spirit, Zingis traversed the world with his countless hosts ; conquered China, Thibet, and Japan, subdued the Mussulman empire of Carizme, and penetrated as far as the Caspian Sea. The conqueror's four sons continued the work which he had commenced, and divided the earth into four parts for their task of desolation. The one to whom was as-

signed the western portion of the earth invaded Christendom with his innumerable squadrons ; the throne of Rurick, the greatest Christian potentate in the north, was overturned ; and for several centuries, Russia, incorporated with the government of Kipzak, groaned under the oppressive yoke of the Mogul sway. Poland was overrun by the all-wasting host of Moguls ; the King of Hungary was defeated, and forced to flee his country ; Silesia was laid waste, and the bloody discomfiture of the Christian army at Lignitz filled the whole western world with consternation. Happily the destroyers penetrated no further into Europe ; and the stream of their conquests, as if diverted by a protecting hand, took its course first towards the Arabian Caliphate of Bagdad, which they put an end to ; and afterwards towards India, and other Asiatic and Mahometan countries. This was a passing, but awful, warning to Christendom, how much she needed the strong arm of a powerful protector, and that union alone would enable her to resist the assaults and inroads of barbarous nations. It was the strong feeling of such a necessity which had first inspired the idea of the Western Empire.

In the German empire, order was first restored by Rodolph of Hapsburgh, who, notwithstanding his earldom of Alsace and his other hereditary demesnes in the Alps, had not yet so much power as many other aspirants to the imperial crown ; but his chivalrous virtues ranking him high in the estimation of many of the princes. A happy and singular coincidence of accidental circumstances occasioned his unexpected election to the empire, which appeared to him, as to many others, a calling from above. Being on the most peaceful understanding with the pope, he yet abandoned his expedition to Rome ; for he was, above all things, anxious to put an end to anarchy, to establish the public tranquillity on a solid basis, and, as far as was then possible, to restore the reign of justice. The high services which by this he rendered to his country in those distracted times, history has not been backward to acknowledge ; and, as the patriarch of the imperial house of Hapsburgh, he has been the founder of a power which, in succeeding ages, has ever proved a pillar of strength and security to Germany and even Europe. But often again did anarchy rear her head, and often did disorder obtain the ascendant in Germany, as well as in other European



states. Nations felt the want of one mighty, independent, and protecting power—they lamented the decline of those Christian principles which had knit so closely all the ties of public and private life ; and they saw with regret the gradual approach of the general dissolution and mighty ruin of European society. Under Rodolph's successors, down to Maximilian and Charles the Fifth, the emperors were confined in their sphere of action to Germany and its internal affairs, which do not here immediately concern us. The expeditions to Rome tended, indeed, to keep alive the remembrance of the old imperial rights and claims ; but they were productive of no permanent advantage, nor real extension of power. It was only in the summoning of general councils (the want of which was soon so urgently felt for the well-being of the church and of Christendom), that the imperial power was really exerted in favour of the general interest in Europe.

But the evils which ensued to the church and its head, from its unhappy conflict with the temporal power, were far more extensive and fatal in their consequences. In the mighty contests between the popes and emperors, it was actual right which was the subject of dispute ; and, in truth, the first basis and highest principle of all right in Christian states, and indeed in all human society ; and however much of error the exaggerations of later times may have infused into these disputes, it was a sublime idea which animated either party. In France, which now took up that attitude of hostility towards the head of the church which the emperors had once assumed, an entirely new era in European policy, which had now ceased to be Christian, commenced with the reign of Philip-le-Bel. In the place of those great motives and lofty ideas which animated a Gregory VII., on the one hand, and a Conrad or Barbarossa, on the other, we meet with a vulgar policy, a selfish cupidity, and an unworthy cunning. In every point of view, Philip the Fair may be considered as the worthy predecessor of Louis XI. Even his conduct towards the whole order of Templars, their execution, or rather judicial murder, for the purpose of confiscation, was a deed of violence which nothing could justify ; even had the suspicion entertained against the more corrupt portion of the order, of having introduced from the East certain un-Christian tenets, rights, and practices, been not entirely destitute of foun-

dation. But yet this suspicion did not affect the whole body, nor even the then worthy grand-master, as was shortly afterwards acknowledged by the King of Portugal and the pope himself ; and, in any case, an ecclesiastical affair of so much importance ought to have been investigated and determined by a mode of procedure very different from this arbitrary and despotic course.

The untimely exaggerations and absolute pretension of Boniface VIII., which, though papal, may almost be termed *Ghibelline* (in the same sense that we have applied that term to the acts of preceding emperors), must have proved very welcome to Philip the Fair. He found in the conduct of the pope, a pretext for enticing him into France, in order, on the first vacancy in the Holy See, to promote the election of a pope favourable to his views, and fix him at Avignon. It was a deep-laid plan of policy on his part, to fix the residence of the popes for ever within his territories, in order more easily to extort their consent to all his selfish projects, as in the case of the Templars ; a policy by which the popes, during seventy years, were kept in a state of absolute dependence on the court of France. And when at last one of the popes succeeded in rescuing the chair of St. Peter from this Babylonish captivity, and placing it again at Rome, popes were elected one against the other at Rome and Avignon ; and a schism broke out in the church which lasted for forty years, till it was finally quelled by the general council of Constance. A deeper wound could not have been inflicted on Christianity than this division in the church, which led minds astray, and introduced an indescribable confusion in all the relations of public and private life. As, without the all-protecting and all-connecting authority of the first Christian emperors, Europe in general, and Germany in particular, would much sooner have been split and dismembered, and been deprived of all power of permanent resistance against foreign aggression, and barbarian inroads ; so, without the papal power, which was founded on, and adapted for, unity, and which held together the fabric of the church, Christianity would very soon have been lost and extinguished in a multitude of particular sects, petty congregations, and opposite parties, even where totally dissimilar systems of religion did not spring up. The maintenance of orthodoxy in the Greek church, where the

patriarch does not possess the same spiritual power, nor the same extensive influence on society, as the pope during the middle ages, cannot be fairly adduced as an objection to the truth of this observation. For it would be absurd to expect from the active, stirring, restless, and animated spirit of the western nations, moving on as they did through a series of rapid, incessant, and progressive changes, that innate monotony of thought even in faith, which was natural to the dead, torpid Byzantine mind. When the Western church had been weakened and convulsed by the conflict with the secular power, the prejudicial and fatal effects of this contest became apparent in religion itself and the internal region of faith. At first, indeed, there arose a mighty moral power of resistance against the growing corruption and the impending evil—a great spiritual remedy, which sprang out of religion, and was perfectly conformable to its spirit. It was here again apparent how that strengthening Spirit of aid and counsel—that Paraclete promised to the church by its divine Founder, knows at every period, and on every new occurrence of danger, to employ the remedies the best and most fitting for the exigencies of the time ; remedies of which the high origin is clearly discernible, though in the hands of men they no longer retain their primitive character, and do not accomplish all the good they might have effected, or even become at last more and more perverted.

The great wealth of the church was not the sole, but one of the principal subjects of dispute with the secular power, and was even a stumbling-block to many, especially among the people. It was this wealth, indeed, which had furnished the means of cultivating and fertilising the soil of Europe, and sowing the seeds of science on the soil of human intellect ; for the existence of the clergy had been founded on landed property, and by this means they had become naturalised and domiciliated in the state, and among the nation ; till the splendid endowments which they received from the liberality of religious zeal, made the abbots, bishops, and the whole of the higher clergy, wealthy lords, senators, and princes. This wealth and this power, the clergy, especially in the earlier times, generally employed in a manner the most praiseworthy, and the most conducive to the welfare of the community.



The annals of modern Europe, and the history of every great and petty state within it, are full of the high political services which the excellent churchmen of the middle age rendered to the public weal. This was universally acknowledged, and any sudden separation of the higher clergy from the state—any degradation of that body from the exalted station which they occupied therein, would have been a most serious loss to society. In the contests of the emperors and other princes with the church at its head, the immediate and original object of dispute was not ecclesiastical property, which no one ever dreamed of attacking ; but the jurisdiction over that property, and the acknowledgment of that jurisdiction. It is easy to conceive that all the members of the higher clergy had not rendered services equally eminent, and that the employment of their riches had not been equally laudable and blameless. But, independently of individual abuses and scandals, the great wealth of the dignified clergy, the eminent and splendid rank they occupied in the state and in society, were ever a stumbling-block to the people, and even to some ecclesiastics, and seemed in contradiction with the original rule and evangelical poverty of the primitive Christians. This was the first cause, the principal subject, and, as it were, the favourite text of that popular opposition which now, after the example had been set by princes and potentates, began to unfurl its banners against the church.

Nothing, therefore, could be better adapted to the exigencies of the age than that, in opposition to the too great worldly pomp of many of the high though meritorious and virtuous dignitaries of that time, communities of men, animated by the sincerest piety, and the most austere spirit of humility and self-denial, should have risen to make themselves all in all to the people, and set the example of perfect evangelical poverty ; or to devote their undivided zeal to popular instruction and the office of preaching. Men of real sanctity, and the most humble piety, and gifted with wonderful powers, entered on this new path of religious zeal ; and many amongst them, with a truly high-minded freedom, reprehended the abuses and the moral corruption then existing in church and state, and among all orders of society. They met with contradiction and opposition, and even at an early period

incurred much blame ; but here we must be careful to distinguish human infirmity and partial degeneracy from the holy origin of those establishments—from that spark of divine inspiration which called these, and all other ecclesiastical institutes, into existence. And thus that tide of popular opposition to the church, which had received its first impulse from the secular power, and the contests of the Ghibelline Emperors, rolled on with an ever-increasing force, swell, and violence. Scarce had the Waldenses disappeared, when a religious sect still more numerous, the Albigenses, broke out in the South of France, and not content with displaying the usual popular opposition to the riches and real abuses of the church, broached many errors and doctrines of the Eastern sects, which during the Crusades may have found their way into that country. For this reason it was thought justifiable to proclaim against them a formal Crusade, and, by a most atrocious war of extermination, wherein the remedy appears no less reprehensible than the evil itself, princes put down this popular sect, which they regarded as rebellious not only against the church, but the state itself.

Wickliffe in England was the first single bold Reformer that appeared, and he was succeeded soon afterwards by an Innovator, whose enterprise was attended with far more important consequences—John Huss in Bohemia. Their writings, abounding not only in the wonted condemnation of real abuses, but in many fanciful doctrines, unfounded assertions, and germs of heresy, their cause as well as the general state of affairs, and the problem of the age, became more complicated and perilous.

John Huss was summoned before the council of Constance, which had terminated so successfully the schism in the Papacy ; but there, without any regard to the imperial safe-conduct which he had received, he was condemned, and delivered over to capital punishment. As one injustice, one act of bloody severity, is sure to bring on another, a few years afterwards the Senators of Prague were precipitated from a window. This was the signal for a general rising of the people ; Ziska, at the head of his infuriated troops, ravaged Bohemia, burst into the neighbouring provinces of Germany, and, with a Hussite army of seventy

thousand men, spread terror every where on his march. This insurrection was indeed suppressed, but Europe grew every day more and more ripe for a Revolution.

A new and pressing danger, which had been long foreseen, now threatened Europe from an opposite quarter. The Turks, who for almost a century had been in possession of the Northern provinces of the Byzantine Empire, became now masters of Constantinople, and the old church of St. Sophia was converted into a Mosque. That portion of Europe which stood in most immediate danger,—Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Poland—was now compelled to make, for the space of more than two centuries, resistance to the progress of the Turkish power the object of its most assiduous attention; and this was a circumstance which tended to impede the emperors in all their other enterprises, to divert their efforts, and consume their best energies, and so far, in the then existing embarrassments in church and state, exerted a very fatal influence on the whole system of European society.

The immediate effects of the siege and fall of Constantinople were highly favourable to literature and science in the last half of the fifteenth century; when the Greek fugitives, by the rich and long-lost treasures of classical knowledge which they brought, created a new and brilliant era in letters and science; in Italy in the first instance, then in Germany (at that time so closely connected with Italy), and lastly in the rest of Europe. The knowledge of their classical tongue and ancient literature had never been totally extinguished among the Greek scholars and ecclesiastics; but in their hands this knowledge remained a mere dead treasure, which was only afterwards turned to profitable account, and to the service of society, by the more active spirit of the Europeans.

The better of the late Byzantine emperors, particularly some of the Palæologi, had cultivated the sciences, and, by their love and encouragement of learning, had given a new life to literature. Even in the period immediately preceding the fall and conquest of Constantinople, many Greeks had taken refuge in Italy, particularly during the various attempts made to bring about the re-union of the Greek with the Roman Church;—attempts, however, which with the



exception of a small number of individuals who went over to the Catholic Church, were not attended with any general success. In Italy the Greek fugitives established schools for their own language and literature, and founded libraries; and if in the time of Petrarch few Italians could be named that were conversant with that language and literature (and among these zealous promoters of Greek learning, Boccaccio must be included with himself,) Florence now under the Medici, the first Cosmo, and Lorenzo the Great, became a flourishing seminary of Grecian letters and erudition; and at Rome also, the house of Cardinal Bessarion was a true Platonic academy of science. Even the study of the ancient Roman writers received a new stimulus, and was prosecuted with a more classical taste and spirit. Courtly literati, and Latin poets formed on the old classical models—political writers in the Latin tongue, which was still the language of diplomacy—statesmen and politicians of the greatest influence, trained up in the school of Greek and Roman history and politics—and polite dilettanti of Pagan antiquity,—all now gave the tone to this new and second epoch in the intellectual culture of Europe. But the ruling spirit and tone of the age proceeded mainly from the revival of the ancient literature and learning of the Greeks. Natural philosophy, whatever extension it may have received from the improvements in astronomy, and a more comprehensive knowledge of the globe obtained by the discovery of the New World, had not yet been wrought into a scientific form, capable of exerting, as it did afterwards, an effective influence on the European mind, or of giving it a new direction. In this period of the restoration of science, some individuals, like Picus Mirandola, and above all, the German Reuchlin, followed a Platonic track in search of a more profound philosophy; or, like Bessarion, Marsilius Ficinus, and others, illustrated and diffused the philosophy of Plato. But these were partial exceptions, and these first attempts were not always faultless. Yet it must ever be a matter of regret that the beginning then made towards a better and more profound philosophy should have been left unfinished. To this the old scholastic philosophy was then a powerful obstacle, and the spirit of anarchy, which the religious contests of the following age called into existence, struck at the root of all

lofty speculation; and even in the flourishing age of the Medici, it was the æsthetic part of ancient literature, and the political application of classical knowledge, which formed the main and almost exclusive object of pursuit.

Thus this regeneration, as it was called, was very imperfect and incomplete; and, in a general sense, was really not such;—even in science itself, the advantages which mankind had obtained, and which they were so eager to display, were more like a passing blossom than a sound and vigorous root. Many of those classical spirits were more conversant and more at home in ancient Rome and Athens—in the manners, history, politics of antiquity, or even in its mythology (then investigated with peculiar fondness and enthusiasm) than in their own age, in the existing relations of society, or in the doctrines and principles of Christianity.

The prevailing character of this new epoch of intellectual cultivation, which succeeded to the scholastico-romantic period of European art and science, was, by those modes of thinking and those modes of life which, with more or less modification and variety, it diffused over all the European countries, at the best a very partial enthusiasm for Pagan antiquity, not merely in the department of art, but in the whole compass of literature; nay, even in history, politics, and morals also. If we compare with the fearful commotions of the following age this classical enthusiasm, often so ill suited to the existing relations of society, its influence on the world will appear like an enchanting draught, which intoxicated for a while the European nations, drew them after objects totally foreign, made them forget themselves in an illusive consciousness of their intellectual refinement; and, lulling them into a false security, blinded them to their own corruption, and the greatness of the impending danger—the yawning abyss on whose verge they then stood.

## LECTURE XV.

General observations on the Philosophy of History.—On the corrupt state of society in the fifteenth century.—Origin of Protestantism, and character of the times of the Reformation.

THE Philosophy of History—that is to say, the right comprehension of its wonderful course, the solution and illustration of its mighty problems, and of the complex enigmas of humanity, and its destiny in the lapse of ages—is not to be found in isolated events, or detached historical facts, but in the principles of social progress. Historical particulars can only serve to characterize the inward motives, the prevailing opinions, the decisive moments, the critical points in the progress of human society; and thus place more vividly before our eyes the peculiar character of every age—each step of mankind in intellectual refinement and moral improvement. To this end, historical details are indispensable: for the ruling principles of social development are of a more exalted kind, and not mere organic laws of nature, from which, as in physiology, when the first principle of the disorder is well understood, we can accurately deduce, and partly at least determine beforehand, the nature of the different phenomena and symptoms, the rule of health, the diagnostic of the disease, as well as the method of cure, the approach of the crisis, and its natural declension, without being obliged to go through the labyrinth of all the different cases that may have ever existed. Again, it is not in the history of man, as in natural history, where the structure of the various plants and animals forms by close analogy one connected system of species and genera; and where the growth, bloom, decay, and extinction of individuals follow in an uniform order, like day and night, or like the change of the seasons. But in the sphere of human freedom; as man is a natural creature, but a natural creature endowed with free-will,



that is to say, with the faculty of moral determination between the good or heavenly impulse, and the wicked or hostile principle; all these organic laws of nature form only the physical basis of his progress and history. And hardly do they form this—but rather a mere disposition of which the direction depends on man, or on the use he makes of his own freedom. It is only when that higher principle of man's free-will has been weakened, debased, obscured, extinguished, and utterly confounded, that those laws of nature can hold good in history. Then, indeed, the symptoms of a diseased age, the organic vices of a nation, the prognostics of a general crisis of the world, may be determined to a certain extent with the precision of medical science. Though the general feelings of mankind clearly declare the soul to be endowed with the faculty of free-will; yet to reason, this freedom is an almost inextricable enigma, the solution of which must be furnished by faith. Or rather, this is a mystery, of which the key and explanation must be sought for in God and his Revelation; and the same will apply to every higher principle, that transcends nature, and nature's laws.

Along with the principle of man's free-will, which rises above necessity, that law of nature—there is another higher and divine principle in the historical progress of nations; and this is the visible guidance of an all-loving and all-ruling Providence displayed in the course of history and the march of human destiny, whether in things great or small. But the power of evil is something more than a mere power of nature, and in comparison with this, it is a power of a higher and more spiritual kind. It is that power whose influence is not only felt in the sensual inclinations of nature, but which, under the mask of a false liberty, unceasingly labours to rob man of his true freedom. Thus Providence is not a mere vague notion, a formula of belief, or a feeling of virtuous anticipation—a mere pious conjecture—but it is the real, effective, historical, redeeming power of God, which restores to man and the whole human race their lost freedom, and with it the effectual power of good. The problem of human existence consists in this, that man in the great stage of history, as in the little details of private life, has to choose and determine between a true heavenly freedom, ever faithful and steadfast to God, and the false,

rebellious freedom of a will separated from God. The mere license of passion or of sensual appetite is no liberty, but a stern bondage under the yoke of nature. But as that false and criminal freedom is spiritual, so it is superior to nature; and it is strictly conformable to truth, to regard him as the first author of this false liberty whom revelation represents as the mightiest, the most potent, and the most intellectual egotist among all created beings either in the visible or invisible world.

Without this freedom of choice innate in man or imparted to him,—this faculty of determining between the divine impulse and the suggestions of the spirit of evil, there would be no history, and without a faith in such a principle there could be no Philosophy of History. If free-will were a mere psychological illusion; if consequently man were incapable of sentiment or deliberate action; if all in life were predetermined by necessity, and subject, like nature, to a blind, immutable destiny; in that case, what we call history, or the description of mankind, would merely constitute a branch of natural science. But such notions are utterly repugnant to the general belief and the most intimate feelings of mankind, according to which, it is precisely the conflict between the good or divine principle on the one hand, and the evil or adverse principle on the other, which forms the purport of human life and human history, from the beginning to the end of time. Without the idea of a God-head regulating the course of human destiny, of an all-ruling Providence, and the saving and redeeming power of God, the history of the world would be a labyrinth without an outlet—a confused pile of ages buried upon ages—a mighty tragedy without a right beginning, or a proper ending; and this melancholy and tragical impression is produced on our minds by several of the great ancient historians, particularly the profoundest of them all, Tacitus, who, towards the close of antiquity, glances so dark a retrospect upon the past.

But the greatest historical mystery—the deepest and most complicated enigma of the world, is the permission of evil on the part of God, which can find its explanation and solution only in the unfettered freedom of man, in the destination of the latter for a state of struggle, exposed to

the influences of two contending powers, and which commences with the first earthly mission of Adam. This is nothing else but the real and entire exercise,—the divinely ordained trial of the faculty of freedom, imparted to the firstling of the new creation,—the image of God, in the conflict and the victory over temptation, and all hostile spirits. That man only who recognises the permission of God given to evil in its at first inconceivably wide extent—the whole magnitude of the power permitted to the wicked principle, according to the inscrutable decrees of God, from the curse of Cain—and the sign of that curse—its unimpeded transmission through all the labyrinths of error, and truth grossly disfigured—through all the false religions of Heathenism,—all the ages of extreme moral corruption, and eternally repeated, and ever increasing crime, down to the period when the anti-christian principle—the spirit of evil, shall usurp entire dominion of the world; when mankind, sufficiently prepared, shall be summoned to the last decisive trial—the last great conflict with the enemy in all the fulness of his power:—that man only, we say, is capable of understanding the great phenomena of universal history in their often strange and dark complexity, as far at least as human eye can penetrate into those hidden and mysterious ways of Providence. But he who regards every thing in humanity, and the progress of humanity, in a mere natural or rationalist point of view, and will explain everything by such views; who though perhaps not without a certain instinctive feeling of an all-ruling Providence—a certain pious deference for its secret ways and high designs, yet is devoid of a full knowledge of, and deep insight into, the conduct of Providence—he to whom the power of evil is not clear, evident, and fully intelligible; he will ever rest on the surface of events and historical facts, and satisfied with the outward appearance of things, neither comprehend the meaning of the whole, nor understand the import of any part. But the matter of greatest moment is to watch the Spirit of God, revealing itself in history, enlightening and directing the judgments of men, saving and conducting mankind, and even here below admonishing, judging, and chastising nations and generations; to watch this Spirit in its progress through all ages, and discern the fiery marks and traces of its footsteps. This



threefold law of the world, these three mighty principles in the historical progress of mankind—the hidden ways of a Providence delivering and emancipating the human race—next, the free-will of man, doomed to a decisive choice in the struggle of life, and every action and sentiment springing from that freedom—lastly, the power permitted by God to the evil principle, cannot be deduced as things absolutely necessary, like the phenomena of nature, or the laws of human reason. Such a general deduction would by no means answer the object intended; but it is in the characteristic marks of particular events and historical facts, that the visible traces of invisible power and design, or of high and hidden wisdom, must be sought for. And hence the Philosophy of History is not a theory standing apart and separated from history, but its results must be drawn out of the multitude of historical facts—from the faithful records of ages, and must spring up, as it were, of themselves, from bare observation. And here an unprejudiced mind will discern the motive, and also the justification, of the course we have pursued; for in the Philosophy of History we have not to do with any system—any series of abstract notions, positions, and conclusions, as in the construction of a mere theory—but with the general principles only of historical investigation and historical judgment.

In the multitude, however, of historical phenomena, all things, especially in times of great party-conflicts, are of a mixed nature, where, in the selection of characteristic traits, we should rather avoid than seek for any rude and violent contrasts. For while, on the one hand, in any great historical contest, we are bound to recognize the full justice of the true cause, yet on the other, we shall often find some flaw—some stain—some weak point connected with that cause—not inherent in the cause itself, but chargeable solely on human infirmity. Or when we must condemn the Revolution of any period, as pernicious in its general relations, and reprehensible in itself, we shall often see some motive lie concealed in its origin—in its first proceedings, which taken in itself, and abstractedly of subsequent errors, and the false consequences thence deduced, comprises some important indications of right—some lofty aspirations after truth. Every general assertion must be restricted by exceptions, and

qualified by various modifications ; and as in historical events, so in historical narration and speculation, nothing is so hurtful and unprofitable as an absolute mode of reflection, inquiry, and decision. This remark we may apply by anticipation to the whole period of latter ages, and as inculcating the necessity of that conciliatory spirit which true philosophy cannot fail of adopting for its rule. It is only when we have gone very deeply into the varied and complex nature of the circumstances of any age, and examined in their manifold bearings those historical phenomena which attend or produce the critical turning-points, the decisive eras of history, that we can clearly discover the spiritual elements—the great ideas which lie at the bottom of a mighty revolution in society. In every other abstract science, an exception from the rule appears a contradiction ; but in the science of history, every real exception serves but the better to make us comprehend and judge the rest.

Such an exception I have now to point out in reference to my remarks on the intellectual progress of Europe, in those two epochs of its mental cultivation, one of which I designated as the scholastico-romantic era, the other as the era of enthusiasm for the Pagan antique ; the former being inadequate to the wants of that age, as well as of posterity, and the other secretly destructive of the old Christian order of things. But on the whole, from the tone prevalent in either period, I do not know I could have otherwise characterized the spirit peculiar to those two epochs. Yet even in those periods, and in the sphere of philosophic and religious meditation, the spirit of Christianity shewed itself independent of, and superior to, the temper of the times ; and between these opposite eras, we meet with works displaying a clear and beautiful simplicity of expression, united with the utmost purity and depth of ascetic feelings. Among several others, I need only cite the German Thomas à Kempis, whose most celebrated work has become a manual of devotion for all the European nations, while those who know the philosophic spirit which reigns in his other writings can well recognize in this the same clear masterly mind, which, throwing off the abstruse forms of the school, pours itself forth in a most lovely simplicity of diction.

I may be permitted to cite this glorious exception of a

mind that, amid the degenerate science of that age, rose into the pure atmosphere of Christian philosophy, inasmuch as it serves to throw a light on the general spirit of the times. Had that mild light of moral truth and divine charity not been then so rare an exception; had that spirit of Christian morality been somewhat more widely diffused; the violent commotions in the following generation would not have occurred; for they would have had no motive, nor object, nor any possible source of existence. But in direct opposition to that pious Fleming, there was a great Italian writer, who gave the tone to the moral and political opinions of his age, and exerted the mightiest influence on his times, both as a moralist and as a politician. I allude to Machiavelli, who may serve as a proof, that the maxims and principles of Pagan antiquity, with which the scholars of that age were imbued, were not confined to the departments of art and of imagination, or of mere erudition, but had a very powerful influence on politics: and however much one may attempt to excuse or explain away the design of one of his works,\* still all his other political writings clearly and evidently shew that he was actuated by no other maxims of state-policy than the old Roman and Pagan principle, of grasping, inexorable, and selfish cunning. This writer announced only with greater clearness and precision what were already the prevailing principles of his times, and was thus the means of bringing those principles to fulness and maturity.

When the Christian bond of union between the European states and nations had been so completely dissevered, policy, together with all moral principle, became for the most part Pagan, came to consider all means as lawful for its ends, respected not the sacredness of any institution, and was guided in all its projects by selfishness, cupidity, or ambition. Animated with this spirit, and guided by these views, Lewis XI. consolidated the absolute authority of the crown in the interior of his dominions, with the same inflexible perseverance of character, and the same consummate political art, which, in his endeavours to maintain his power against the Duke of Burgundy and other neighbours, characterized his foreign policy. In Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Spain, who permanently united the two kingdoms of Arra-

\* The Prince.



gon and Castile, put an end to the Arab dominion by the conquest of Granada, and came into possession of the golden mines of America, the arbitrary principles of policy and of government, which were then so generally prevalent, are particularly perceptible. The barbarous persecution and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain was certainly prejudicial to the welfare of the country, was in itself an act of reprehensible severity, and was, above all, a dangerous precedent for the further extension and application of the same oppressive policy towards the Arabian population (still very numerous in many provinces of Spain), and towards the peaceable descendants of the old Mahomedan conquerors. From the contests carried on in Spain itself with the Mahomedans for the space of eight centuries, a religious war almost entered into the system of national policy. The wisdom of a great and lenient monarch, like Charles the Fifth, might, indeed, mitigate the evils of the times, and as long as he lived, and as far as circumstances permitted, might oppose a check to the torrent of the new opinions in Germany. But with all his pacific endeavours he was unable either to prevent the rupture and separation of a part of Germany, or to stop the progress of arbitrary principles of government, which, under his successor on the Spanish throne, became perfectly irresistible. The intermixture of political and ecclesiastical affairs and institutions existed more or less everywhere, and in truth had a deep historical foundation in the peculiar circumstances of place; and unless we deeply investigate all the particulars of those local circumstances, and accurately discriminate their several peculiarities, it would be difficult, and indeed rash, to pronounce a general opinion respecting them—as so sweeping a judgment would give a false and erroneous turn to a censure apparently well founded, and often just in itself. The Inquisition in Spain, for instance, was, from the very peculiar character which it took in that country, far more a political than an ecclesiastical institute. If the secular power had been guilty of arbitrary and violent encroachments on ecclesiastical jurisdiction, ecclesiastical power in its turn had, from the spirit of the times, become in many respects too secular.

When the Popes had returned to Rome from the captivity

of Avignon, experience taught them how necessary to their dignity and independence was the possession of a sovereign principality, which, however inconsiderable, should be at least free from foreign control. Nay, since the German Empire had become really extinct, or existed only in name, it was the interest of the secular powers themselves, that the political authority of the Pope within the ecclesiastical states should rest on a firm and secure foundation, and should thus afford them a guarantee that the sovereign Pontiff would not again be in a state of exclusive dependence on any one of the different powers—divided as they now all were in interests, and animated by mutual jealousy. Without taking into account the personal scandals of Alexander VI., the mode in which some Popes, especially of the Borgia family, sought to consolidate their power within the ecclesiastical territory, must have appeared very revolting in the spiritual heads of Christendom. And although Julius II. possessed many great and princely qualities, still an injurious impression must have been produced on the public and popular mind, when the chief ecclesiastic, and a prince of peace, girded on the sword, and put on the martial cuirass. The name of the Medicean Pope, Leo X., is one celebrated in the history of art and science, and serves to denote its most brilliant era; he possessed perhaps all the qualities most calculated to shed lustre round the throne of a secular monarch; but he was not the Pontiff to discern the fearful dangers and urgent necessities of the church in that age, to avert those dangers by his foresight, or to surmount them by conciliation.

A succession of such Pontiffs immediately prior to the breaking out of the Reformation is of no slight historical importance. It would really appear as if the church were destined, by the losses it experienced, to learn the greatness of the danger to which its too worldly policy exposed it, and to be brought back by misfortune to its true, proper, and essential destination. Indeed, at that time, the materials of political combustion were by no means wanting in Italy. Even in the absence of the Popes, a political fanatic, Rienzi, had excited a Revolution for the purpose of restoring the ancient republic; and the internal feuds and civil wars of Florence were the effects of factions, almost inseparable from

a state constituted like the Florentine Republic. In the last period of civil disorder, shortly after Lorenzo's death, a religious fanatic, the Dominican Savanarola, appeared at the head of a political Revolution; and his revolutionary principles were strangely mixed up with his religious tenets. Here evidently is a fact not undeserving of attention, if we would wish to form a right estimate of the state and circumstances of that age: it is, that the very origin of this new species of fanaticism or heresy, and not its ulterior progress (as in the case of the Hussites), was marked and accompanied by political commotions, and crimes against the state.

When that bond of religious unity—that high fellowship of Christian feeling which had united the various states of Christendom, was in a great measure dissolved, the different powers of Europe (as is usually the case among neighbouring independent nations, when directed by separate views of policy)—the different powers of Europe engaged in a system of alliances, subject to various fluctuations, but all formed on the principle of a mere dynamical equilibrium—just as if government and social power, even under the influence of Christianity, were nought but a mere material weight—a mere lever of physical force. Ever since the expedition of Charles VIII. into Italy had provoked resistance and occasioned a reaction, the dominion of that country, for which Spain and France contended with all their might, was a peculiar subject of jealousy between those states, and gave rise to many wars. The other powers that took an active part in this game of political alliances—this system of the balance of power—were Venice, the Emperor Maximilian, and the Pope. How very much an active participation in affairs of so worldly a nature was unbecoming the last-named potentate, I need not stop to observe. That conduct gave occasion afterwards to a great public scandal. For instance, when the Pope had formed an alliance with the King of France against Charles V.; and to resent this, the Emperor's German army (among whom were a great many entertaining the opinions of Luther) had proceeded to the conquest of Rome; this was a fresh and mighty source of scandal at that momentous epoch. Nay, the great dissatisfaction of the Emperor with the conduct of some Popes (though this re-



ferred merely to their political acts), when coupled with his conciliatory conduct towards the German Protestants, induced many to question the sincerity of his attachment to the Catholic faith. However false and unfounded such a surmise might be, still all things contributed to foster the belief, and on all sides there was a concurrence of circumstances to lead the public mind more and more astray.

The good and high-minded Emperor, Maximilian, who had meditated, and might have accomplished, many other noble projects and important enterprises, was compelled to labour during his whole life, though in vain, to discover, in the total absence of all physical resources, some counterpoise to the power of France, and some barrier and security against the encroachments of Turkish ambition. But when fortune had placed on the head of Charles V. the united crowns of Spain and Burgundy, the necessity of choosing an emperor, who, like those of earlier ages, might be capable of coping with all the dangers of the times, was universally felt; and this feeling led to the election of Charles. But for this choice, the system of European states would have fallen to pieces, and Christendom become a prey as well to foreign conquests as to internal anarchy. The mind of Charles was entirely occupied with the old idea of a universal Christian empire, and a religious feeling was at the bottom of all his political schemes and enterprises. But whatever might be the extent of the countries over which he reigned, and whatever the apparent greatness of his power, yet amid the various designs he had to prosecute, and in the struggle he had to maintain against the combined array of so many hostile elements, he felt the want of those real resources which are to be found in a compact and well-united monarchy. To the Spanish crown he imparted great splendour, and even in Italy remained the master; but he met with very imperfect success in his efforts against Mahomedan power—a power from whose oppressions, and still further encroachments, it was the first duty of the emperor, as the armed protector of Christendom, to defend the European states. His conciliatory policy towards the German Protestants did not attain its object, for amid the general ferment of the age, the torrent of religious opinions bore down all before it. His wish to re-establish order in church and state by means of a gene-

ral council, and thereby to consolidate anew the old foundations of faith, was fully accomplished only after his death.

In all that regards the origin and first breaking out of the Reformation, I wish to premise, that all controversy on points of dogma, all controversy on the merits or demerits of individuals, the worthiness or unworthiness of persons, does not enter into the plan of this work. My object is particularly to describe the various manner in which the religious revolution commenced in the three or four countries over which it exerted the most remarkable influence; as well as the dissimilar form which it finally assumed in each of those countries. I wish particularly to trace the influence of the Reformation on the progress of Christian states, and on European literature and science; two things which constitute the main subject of the last chapters of this Philosophy of History. But we must notice briefly, and as far as is necessary to the elucidation of the subject, the point of connexion existing between persons and doctrines, and the historical event which alone is the subject of our inquiries. In the first place, it is evident of itself, that a man who accomplished so mighty a revolution in the human mind, and in his age, could have been endowed with no common powers of intellect, and no ordinary strength of character. Even his writings display an astonishing boldness and energy of thought and language, united with a spirit of impetuous, passionate, and convulsive enthusiasm. The latter qualities are not, indeed, very compatible with a prudent, enlightened, and dispassionate judgment. The opinion as to the use which was made of those high powers of genius must of course vary with the religious principles of each individual; but the extent of those intellectual endowments themselves, and the strength and perseverance of character with which they were united, must be universally admitted. Many who did not adhere afterwards to the new opinions, still thought, at the commencement of the Reformation, that Luther was the real man for his age, who had received a high vocation to accomplish the great work of regeneration, the strong necessity of which was then universally felt: for no well-thinking man then dreamed of a subversion of the ancient faith. If, at this great distance of time, we pick out of the writings of this individual many very harsh expressions, nay, particular words

which are not only coarse but absolutely gross, nothing of any moment can be proved or determined by such selections. Indeed, the age in general, not only in Germany, but in other very highly civilised countries, was characterised by a certain coarseness in manners and language, and by a total absence of all excessive polish and over-refinement of character. But this coarseness would have been productive of no very destructive effects; for intelligent men well knew that the wounds of old abuses lay deep, and were ulcerated in their very roots; and no one was therefore shocked if the knife, destined to amputate abuses, cut somewhat deep. Luther acquired, too, the respect of princes, even of those opposed to him. Thus when, shortly after the commencement of the Reformation, a general insurrection of peasants broke out, which renewed all the excesses of the Hussites, Luther, so far from exciting the rebels, like some of the new Gospellers, opposed them with all the powers of his commanding eloquence, and all the weight of his high authority; for he was by no means in politics an advocate for democracy, like Zuinglius and Calvin, but he asserted the absolute power of princes, though he made his advocacy subservient to his own religious views and projects. It was by such conduct, and the influence which he thereby acquired, as well as by the sanction of the civil power, that the Reformation was promoted and consolidated. Without this, Protestantism would have sunk into the lawless anarchy which marked the proceedings of the Hussites, and to which the war of the peasants rapidly tended; and it would inevitably have been suppressed, like all the earlier popular commotions,—for under the latter form, Protestantism may be said to have sprung up several centuries before. And besides, none of the other heads and leaders of the new religious party had the power, or were in a situation to uphold the Protestant religion—its present existence is solely and entirely the work and the deed of one man, unique in his way, and who holds unquestionably a conspicuous place in the history of the world. Much was staked on the soul of that man, and this was in every respect a mighty and critical moment in the annals of mankind and the march of time. The real problem for the age would have been to terminate this unhappy confusion of doctrines, that is to say, that disorder and not unfrequent



confusion in the relations of the ecclesiastical and civil powers (occasioned by the general state of things in Europe, and by the circumstances which first promoted the political and intellectual civilisation of the West)—in a word, to compose the whole dispute between church and state, and bring it to a just Christian settlement by a peaceful and amicable arrangement. Then the many existing, though scattered, rays of true Christian piety, humility, and self-denial, as well as the new discoveries in science, would have acquired a more intense and more extended power—an event which was now entirely prevented by a great civil war between two religious parties, and was not brought to a full accomplishment till a much later period. But the total rejection of the traditions of the past (and here was the capital vice and error of this Revolution) rendered the evil incurable; and even for biblical learning and philology, now so highly valued, the true key of interpretation, which sacred tradition alone can furnish, was irretrievably lost, as the sequel has but too well proved. And even if this were not the case, how could mere learned institutes of biblical philology, united with popular schools of morality, constitute the spirit and essence of a religion? This is no where so fully understood, and so deeply felt, as in Protestant Germany at the present day—Germany, where lies the root of Protestantism, its mighty centre, its all-ruling spirit, its vital power, and its life-blood—Germany, where to supply the want of the true spirit of religion, a remedy is sought sometimes in the external forms of liturgy,\* sometimes in the pompous apparatus of biblical philology and research, destitute of the true key of interpretation,† sometimes in the empty philosophy of Rationalism, and sometimes in the mazes of a mere interior Pietism.

Undoubtedly even within the pale of Catholicism we meet occasionally with individuals who adopt the same, or at least very similar systems, who either give in to the principle of

\* Schlegel here alludes to the Ordinances promulgated a few years ago by the King of Prussia, for the reform of the Protestant Liturgy.

† The author here refers to that mania for Biblical criticism, long prevalent in Protestant Germany, and which, however it may inform our reason, and gratify a laudable curiosity, is in itself no guide to the knowledge of religious truth.—*Trans.*

Rationalism, or to a false theological illuminism (as in the recent period of Neology), or like some of the Jansenists, indulge in the unsafe and illusive suggestions of a sentimental mysticism. For the contests of two hostile parties will not always prevent the imitation of defects, and the contagion of errors; and this is only an additional reason why, in a work of this kind, we should abstain from entering more closely and minutely into the nature of these controversies. In contemplating the first steps of this great Revolution, in considering the circumstances of that period, we experience a feeling of regret, that the great problem of that age, the arduous task which devolved on it, of accomplishing an universal regeneration and real Reformation of the world, should have remained unexecuted, from the very revolutionary turn which affairs took—nay, that this task should not even have been understood or felt by any of the leading characters of the time. The earlier disputes between the spiritual and temporal powers had related to the dominion over certain territories, or over Ecclesiastical property in general, and especially to the jurisdiction of the state over the latter species of property. The allurements which the confiscation of church property held out to cupidity must be ranked among the main causes which contributed to the diffusion of Protestantism. Thus, for instance, Prussia, the country of the Teutonic order, was now converted into a secular duchy; and in the interior of Germany, a celebrated knight,\* led away by the spirit of that age of feud, invaded one of the Ecclesiastical electorates, thinking, no doubt, that that state, like every other Ecclesiastical domain, was the lawful booty of the first comer. But independently of these partial changes and minor transactions, (and in many Protestant countries, such as England and Sweden, church property remained inviolate, and even episcopacy was retained,) the hostility of the German Reformers to the church was of a different and more spiritual nature; and it was the religious dignity of the priesthood which was more especially the object of their destructive efforts. And this is the point where doctrinal controversy enters within the province of history; for the priesthood stands or falls with faith in the sacred mysteries. The rejection of these

\* Schlegel here alludes to Prince Albert of Brandenburg.

mysteries by one half of the Protestant body in Switzerland, France, England, and the Netherlands, Luther not only discountenanced, but strenuously reprobated; yet it was only by a subtle distinction he attempted to separate those mysteries from the functions of the priesthood; and it was not difficult to foresee that together with faith in the sacred mysteries, respect for the clergy must sooner or later be destroyed, as indeed experience has sufficiently demonstrated. For that great mystery of religion, on which the whole dignity of the Christian priesthood depends, forms the simple, but very deep internal keystone of all Christian doctrines; and thus the rejection, or even the infringement of this dogma, shakes the foundations of religion, and leads to its total overthrow. The pacific conferences of learned and well-meaning men of both parties, though often renewed, were not attended with real and ultimate success; although sometimes, in looking at the language of such a man as the mild Melancthon, we are almost perplexed to discover the few points which do not coincide with the old Catholic doctrines—so nearly akin, and almost identical, do the two religious systems appear, when we merely consider their separate parts. Equally fruitless were all those honest attempts at pacification incessantly made by the Emperor Charles, who sought by his interim to create delay, while he indulged a secret hope, that the agitated waves of anarchy, all that mighty tempest of opinion, would be allayed by time, and would finally be stilled. But that interim has been of longer duration than was at first calculated, and it still awaits the judgment of God for its great day of termination.

When we consider Luther's original powers of mind, independently of the use and employment which he made of those extraordinary powers, (for even the greatest comet, though it should cover half the heavens with the splendour of its light, can never possess, or be supposed to possess, the sun's genial warmth,)—when, I say, we consider the intellectual endowments of this extraordinary man solely in themselves; the boldness of his speculations and the vigour of his eloquence will be found to form an epoch, not only (as is universally acknowledged) in the history of the German language, but in the progress of European science and



European culture. After the first period in the intellectual history of Europe, which I denominated the scholastico-romantic epoch, and after the second, which I termed the epoch of enthusiasm for Pagan Antiquity, and in which a Christian simplicity of eloquence and a depth of scientific inquiry appear as only happy and occasional exceptions,—a third epoch now arose, which, from the general spirit of the age, and the tone of the writings which exerted a commanding influence over the times, cannot be otherwise designated than as the era of a polemico-barbarous eloquence. This rude polemic spirit, which had its origin in the Reformation, and in that concussion of faith, and consequently of all thought and all science, which Protestantism occasioned, continued, down to the end of the seventeenth century, to prevail in the controversial writings and philosophic speculations both of Germany and England. This spirit was not incompatible with a sort of deep mystical sensibility, and a certain original boldness of thought and expression, such, for instance, as Luther's writings display; yet we cannot at all regard in a favourable light the general spirit of that intellectual epoch, or consider it as one by any means adapted to the intellectual exigencies of that age. But with respect to the language and literature of Germany, so far as these are of general interest, I should wish to make one observation. Besides Thomas à Kempis, whom I have already mentioned, I might cite several other religious writers of the fifteenth century, and even of an earlier period, who, though less known, were distinguished by a similar spirit, partly among those who made use of the Latin language, then universally current, and partly among those who, like Taulerus, for example, made the German the vehicle of their thoughts. And indeed, were we to compare the gentle simplicity, the charming clearness of thought and expression, which reign in the works of these writers, with the productions of the following age of barbarous polemic strife, we should then be furnished with the best criterion for duly appreciating the earlier and the later period.

With respect to those institutes of the church, which had early devoted themselves to the task of the propagation of the gospel, or of the defence and support of religion, and made this spiritual conflict and holy engagement the

business of their lives ; it now happened, as it had often occurred before, that the proper defenders of the church arose at that moment, and adopted that course and mode of defence which the circumstances of the church precisely required. The powerful prelates of the old Episcopal sees, who had rendered such high and imperishable services to the cause of European civilization, though they might not be unfaithful to the original spirit of their calling, and might be no strangers to science, were, however, much too dependent on government, and mixed up in affairs of state. The more popular and mendicant orders, from their very nature and character, and their peculiar habits of life and modes of speech, were not always calculated to exert due influence on government and the upper classes of society, while their ardent zeal, unmindful of times and circumstances, often transgressed the bounds of moderation. The great want of the age was a religious order which, established in opposition to Protestantism, should not be dependent on the state, but devoted exclusively to the interests of the church : a religious order which, well equipped with modern learning, science, and accomplishment, possessing a knowledge of the world, acquainted with the spirit of the times, and pursuing the course which expediency dictated, with prudence and circumspection, should undertake the defence of the Catholic religion, and the propagation of the gospel in foreign countries, and worthily and successfully prosecute this twofold object. Such an order was the society of the Jesuits in its first institution ; and that among the founders and first members of this order there were men of undoubted piety and eminent sanctity, men animated by the sublimest principles of Christian self-denial, possessed of great intellectual endowments, and favoured by God with high preternatural powers, no unprejudiced historical inquirer will deny. Whether the reproaches which have been made to many members of this order, of having exerted an undue political influence, and displayed a spirit of intrigue and ambition in the history of this period, be well founded or not, I shall not stop to inquire ; because such charges at best can affect individuals only, and not the society, whose very name, indeed, has become in our times the watchword of party strife and contention. The severest condemnation of the Jesuits proceeds

from a quarter where we clearly discern the most implacable hostility to Christianity and to all religion ; and this circumstance ought to furnish the Jesuits with an additional claim to our good opinion ; but any judgment on the merits of this society, as this is a question which more immediately regards the present age, is quite foreign to the purpose of the present work. If some members of the order adopted at this period those absolute maxims and principles of policy and government which in general characterized that age ; and if the writings of others were distinguished by that rude polemic tone and spirit spoken of above, and which was equally characteristic of those times ; it would be unjust to lay to the charge of the order, or even of particular members, failings and defects which were common to the age, and a perfect exemption from which is the most rare of human excellencies.

A violent insurrection can be put down only by forcible means ; but every system of terror, of whatsoever nature, is sure to provoke, sooner or later, a reaction equally terrible. And if the dangerous disease be checked by means merely external, and no healing remedy be applied to the root and principle of the disorder, nor used to renovate the impaired organs of life—if the fire be smothered in its own flames—it will lie concealed beneath the ashes, and will burn in secret, till the first casual and unlucky spark shall kindle it anew into a fiercer blaze. Such, in my opinion, are the plain and obvious principles which the historian should bear in mind while passing in review periods of revolution like the one under consideration ; principles which, even now, are susceptible of no very remote application.

In that first period of ferment which marked the birth of the Reformation, the revolt of the peasants had been put down with amazing promptitude and vigour. It was but ten years later when, in the north of Germany, a new insurrection broke out, which, from its religious complexion, seemed still more revolting, whose adherents sought to establish on earth the invisible empire of God by fire and sword, and whose new spiritual monarch, John of Leyden, made his triumphant entry into Munster amid many and dreadful excesses ; till at last this savage fanaticism was crushed, and, as invariably happens in similar cases, met with a bloody end.



But the most singular phenomenon at this momentous epoch was Henry VIII. of England—a prince who, while he adhered to the Catholic doctrines, and zealously asserted them against Luther, yet severed his kingdom from the church, declared himself its spiritual head, and by that monstrous and unchristian combination of the two powers, appeared in the midst of Christendom like the Caliph of England. When, too, we take into consideration the private life of this prince—his endless series of divorces, and the execution of his queens—his conduct was a greater scandal to his contemporaries, and fixes a deeper stain on the history of his age, than any other earlier example in Italy or elsewhere, several of which have been already mentioned. The executions on account of religion which took place under Henry, and which, as he was opposed to both Catholics and Protestants, affected the two parties alike, were of a peculiarly odious and blood-thirsty character. On this subject I wish to make one observation. From the connexion which then subsisted between church and state, a case might easily arise where a religious error would become a political crime. When an insurrection originating in a religious cause breaks out, and threatens the peace of society, like the religious war of the Hussites, and the revolt of the German peasants, no other resource remains but to put down force by force. But when the first violence has subsided, another, and a better, and a truly moral remedy should, if possible, be applied to the evil; and this remedy was not always administered in a right, benign, and truly-Christian form. Strange and fanciful have been, in all times and places, the offsprings of human error. Thus, even in the most modern times, and in a peaceful and civilised country, examples still occur, where religious errors lead their unhappy dupes to violent attempts on their own lives, or the lives of others; and a wise legislation and humane judicature should rather treat these errors as mental diseases than judge them according to the rigid letter of criminal law. How much more should not this be the case when religious error is confined to the sphere of speculation, and is not attended with any practical consequences. It is often, perhaps, not easy to draw the line of demarcation between measures of wise precaution against the assaults of a dangerous fanaticism, and unchristian modes of punishment.

But certainly the criminal process of ecclesiastical tribunals at that period was not only opposed to the spirit of Christianity, but at utter variance with the express and ancient canons of the church and urgent admonitions of the Fathers, that the church should strenuously avoid the shedding of blood. Men sought to evade this wise and beautiful law by abandoning all executions to the secular arm; but except in the punishment of actual crimes, and in the necessary defence against open insurrection, we must admit that the spirit of this law was grievously violated. A vindictive criminal jurisprudence, which was then dictated by the mutual rage of contending parties, and which was made still more revolting to Christian feelings by the religious colouring it assumed, remains a stigma on that age; for it was the work not of one, but of both religious parties; or, to speak more properly, of members of both parties. The commencement, indeed, of this great disorder—of this great departure from the law of love—is to be found in the middle age, during the strife of exasperated factions; but how small are those beginnings, when compared with the excesses of subsequent times! When we hear the middle age called barbarous, we should remember that that epithet applies with far greater force to the truly barbarous era of the Reformation, and of the religious wars which that event produced, and which continued down to the period when a sort of moral and political pacification was re-established, apparently at least, in society and in the human mind.

## LECTURE XVI.

Further development and extension of Protestantism, in the period of the religious wars, and subsequently thereto.—On the different results of those wars in the principal European countries.

THE true Reformation, loudly demanded in the fifteenth century as the most urgent want of the times, not only by the capricious voice of the multitude, but by the first and most legitimate organs of opinion in church and state, and the nature of which had been long before clearly stated, and fully and generally understood, ought to have been a divine Reformation: then would it have carried with it its own high sanction—it would have proved it by the fact; and at no time, and under no condition, would it have severed itself from the sacred centre and venerable basis of Christian tradition, in order—reckless of all legitimate decisions, preceding as well as actual—to perpetuate discord, and seek in negation itself a new and peculiar basis for the edifice of schismatic opinion. Such a vast, extensive, deep, and effectual reform, which, while it kept within the limits of ancient faith, and steadily adhered to its divine centre, would at the same time renovate and revivify the Church, was not then accomplished. The disciplinary canons of the Council of Trent undoubtedly contained many wise, excellent, and wholesome regulations, whose efficacy has been proved by the experience of the different Catholic countries, and whose reception has been determined by the local circumstances of each; for these regulations, intended for the correction and removal of abuses, and for the revival of ancient discipline, were not adopted without modification, nor received to a like extent, in all Catholic countries. On the other hand, with respect to the Protestants, the decrees of the Council of Trent, from the very nature of things, could be only of a defensive character. Instead of the desired Reformation,



Protestantism early enough announced itself as a new and peculiar religion, and still more was it constituted as such; but the rupture was already consummated—the evil had become incurable before the remedy was applied. Protestantism was the work of man; and it appears in no other light even in the history which its own disciples have drawn of its origin. The partisans of the Reformation proclaimed, indeed, at the outset, that if it were more than a human work, it would endure, and that its duration would serve as a proof of its divine origin. But surely no one will consider this an adequate proof, when he reflects that the great Mohammedan heresy, which, more than any other, destroys and obliterates the divine image stamped on the human soul, has stood its ground for full twelve hundred years; though this religion, if it proceed from no worse source, is at best a human work. But even as the mere work of man, the Reformation was unquestionably a mighty, extraordinary, and momentous revolution, which, when once it had been outwardly established in the world (though inwardly it remained in a state of perpetual agitation), has thenceforward mostly directed the march of modern times, influenced the legislation and policy of the European states, and stamped the character of modern science down to our own days, when, though its influence has not been so exclusive and undivided as at an earlier period, it has been still the main and stirring cause of all the great political changes, and all the new and astonishing events, of our age. We must endeavour to view this great Revolution with the impartial eye of the historian, and labour duly to comprehend and judge it in all its manifold bearings, and in all its remote consequences; and if we should feel inclined to lament and deplore the long continuance of this unhappy division in the great European family, we should remember, that such a feeling of regret, however innocent and natural in our own bosoms and in our own conviction, can furnish no adequate criterion for an historical decision. At any rate, we should in no case immoderately repine at such an event, and murmur against Destiny—that is to say, the ruling Providence which permits the occurrence of such evils. The permission by God of a mere human, unsanctioned enterprise, nay, of a mighty, general, protracted, and incurable division among mankind—a system of opposi-

tion, with all its unhappy consequences, its moral impediments, and its political disasters ; such a permission forms, as I have already observed, the great enigma of history—the wonderful secret of the divine decrees in the conduct of mankind, as well as in the conduct of individuals. Perhaps this great enigma will then only be perfectly unravelled, and the mystery which hangs over this subject then only be perfectly dispelled, when this mighty Revolution shall have been terminated and brought to a close. Even now, the experience we have acquired, however imperfect and limited it may be, makes one thing evident ; namely, that the influence of Protestantism has not been confined to those states and countries where it became predominant, and where it received a public and legal establishment. Far greater was the danger, far more fatal were the consequences, when an open rupture, a formal separation from the church did not take place, or had, if a temporary, at least no permanent existence—but where Protestantism, that is to say, the spirit of Protestantism, a like or a kindred set of opinions, was infused into the moral system of countries externally Catholic, and secretly instilled into the veins of the body politic, gradually corroded its vitals ; till at last, amid a false and apparent repose, the long-suppressed element of revolutionary innovation infected with its deadly virus opinion, science, and lastly, government and society. The conscience in its inquiries after religious truth, to whatever decision it may come, only looks to the determination of a point of faith as the sole clue of its investigations. But in historical inquiries, this rigid intersecting line of faith forms no adequate rule of judgment. The experience of our own times, or that of the last generation, has proved that innovations in faith, politics, and philosophy, ingrafted on a Catholic nation, are far more fatal to its repose, and that of its neighbours, than a system of Protestantism which has settled into a state of permanent peace and stability. Hence, for instance, the policy and political interests of England, which is a state more than any other essentially Protestant, have often been in perfect accordance with the political system of an old leading Catholic power. And, I would ask, has the Atheism of the eighteenth century been productive of fewer commotions and less convulsion in the world than Protestantism in the first period of its ex-

istence, or in the era of religious wars? although the infidel party in the last century by no means constituted a distinct and separate sect; but was like a deadly contagion of the spirit of the times, infecting all beside and around, above and below it, whithersoever the wind of chance or the breath of fanatic zeal might carry it.

According to my own personal conviction, the theological point of view is to be preferred in historical inquiries as the best and final rule of investigation. But in these latter times, when religious opinion is so divided, and where the juridical view of things, in which each party struggles to make out a favourable case for itself, leads only to endless disputes, the historian is compelled to view the diseased state of society with the eye of a pathologist. In medicine it is considered far better and more advantageous that a dangerous disease should be got rid of in a decisive but happily terminated struggle for life or death, than that by any sudden check given to the crisis the disorder should fall on any internal part, and thus attack and corrode the vital powers. This principle, which the history of particular countries has shewn to be equally applicable to man's moral existence, may be applied to the general state of Europe at that period. If Protestantism had then been outwardly suppressed and put down, would it not have raged inwardly, that is to say, would not the most essential part of Protestantism, the spirit of revolutionary innovation, the spirit of destructive negation—rationalism, in a word—have secretly remained? And may we not conclude from the examples of a partial experience, that that secret and inward working of the disease would have been far more dangerous and fatal? I should wish that these and other like expressions before made use of should not be taken as so many categorical assertions; for the question of doctrine, lying as it does beyond the reach of doubt, does not fall within the limits of my plan, and the perfect reconciliation of minds is not in the power of man, but can come only from God. But these expressions are merely meant to convey a conciliatory view of things in history, and (as is the proper duty of the philosophic historian) to vindicate the ways of Providence. Undoubtedly this great religious contest, this long-protracted struggle, has tended to excite



the emulation of both parties in the pursuits of learning and the labours of science, to stir up a mutual vigilance in the moral conduct of individuals as well as in the administration of states, and thus to keep both parties in a state of salutary watchfulness and activity. Even from the collision of these two conflicting elements there has sprung up in some countries a new and third element, which, though not such as could be desired, nor entirely conformable to Christianity, has still been productive of important and remarkable consequences. Of the eight or nine countries in which Protestantism has obtained a firm footing, and acquired a permanent existence, there are three in particular where it has been attended with mighty historical effects, and where the originally destructive conflict of hostile elements has given birth to three new and momentous phenomena in the history of mankind. These are, in Germany, the religious pacification, which forms the basis of her future prosperity, stamps the peculiar character of the German nation, and designates its future moral destiny; in England, the highly-valued, or, as it is there called, the glorious Constitution of 1688, whose mere outward form, or dead letter, has been an object of desire to so many other nations; lastly, in France, the revolution in philosophy produced by the indirect influence of Protestantism, and the combination of so many Protestant or semi-Protestant elements, and which gave birth to a frightful political revolution, which, after a short intervenient period of military despotism, has been succeeded in its turn by a mighty epoch of moral and social regeneration—a regeneration which indeed has not yet been consummated, which is still in a state of precarious and convulsive labour, but is even on that account the more entitled to the historian's attention.

Of the countries immediately contiguous to Germany, the home and cradle of Protestantism, Switzerland was, at the commencement of the Reformation, the theatre of a fierce civil war, in which the Swiss reformer fell fighting on the field of battle. But the strong federal spirit of the Swiss, the necessity of mutual defence, and the nearly equal numbers and strength of both religious parties, produced at an early period a religious pacification. The indirect Protestant influence which French Switzerland has exerted

over France has continued very great and powerful from Calvin to Rousseau. After the German treaty of Westphalia, the Austrian emperors established in Hungary, which was already half subdued by the Turks, and still more exposed to their ravages, the principle of religious toleration—a principle that became a received maxim of state, and was incorporated into the very constitution of the country. In the last half of the sixteenth century there penetrated into Poland the sect of Socinus, which professed tenets distinct from those of the primitive Reformers, and which, with the usually rapid march of religious innovation and schismatic dissent, had now rejected, along with the great mystery of devotion, the fundamental article of Christian theology, the doctrine of the Trinity. As long as the Socinians formed a distinct and separate body of religionists, they were not very numerous in Poland or elsewhere; but during the prevailing infidelity of the eighteenth century they acquired many more disciples, and in many countries have become almost the predominant sect. How Prussia, the land of the Teutonic order, was transformed into a secular duchy, which for about a century remained connected with Poland, I have already had occasion to observe. Into no country of Europe was Christianity introduced so late as into Lithuania, where the faith was planted only towards the end of the fourteenth century. In the ancient Russian provinces of Poland, as well as in Hungary and other neighbouring countries, a large portion of the population belonged to the Greek church. In the great struggle of the following age, and in the perpetual wars which Poland had to sustain against Turkey, Sweden, and Russia, all these hostile and heterogeneous elements of which I have spoken, and to which may be added the real or apparent attachment of the religious dissenters to Sweden, increased the general ferment and confusion in the Polish state down to the final dissolution and dismemberment of the kingdom. Russia, which, towards the end of the fifteenth century, had been restored to a high degree of power and splendour by Wassili Ivanowitch (who entertained the most friendly relations with the Emperor Maximilian, and who had established in his empire the German Hanseatic league)—Russia still remained totally separated from the European community,

and was exempt from the influence of Protestantism, like Spain and Italy, at the opposite extremity of Europe. The Scandinavian countries, at the commencement of the fifteenth century, had been incorporated into one state, and considered merely in a geographical point of view, they might have formed a great and lasting power in the north; and, under many vicissitudes, they remained united till the sixteenth century. Yet the voice and feelings of the two nations were against the union; and Gustavus Vasa effected at once the total and definitive separation of Sweden from Denmark, the establishment of his own monarchical sway in the former country, and the introduction of Protestantism, which was brought into Sweden, not as in other countries, by the torrent of popular opinion, but by the arm of power—by the authority of a sovereign who knew how to conduct the enterprise with steady perseverance, and slow, patient, and consummate skill. In Sweden, however, Episcopacy was retained. By its situation betwixt Prussia and Poland, and by the Protestant influence in Germany, Sweden became for a time, in the seventeenth century, a great European power; and to this political eminence the personal qualities of Gustavus Adolphus, as well as of several other Swedish monarchs, principally contributed. In Sweden, Protestantism did not give rise to any events of a new and peculiar character, or of great historical moment, as in England and Germany. The Reformation was established in Denmark chiefly, though not exclusively, as in Sweden, by sovereign power; in Iceland its establishment was almost the work of violence. In those still regions of the north the real abuses and scandals existing in the Catholic church were neither so great nor numerous as in the southern countries. There was greater simplicity of manners; and corruption was much less diffused, much less generally known, than even in Germany; and thus the ancient faith had struck deeper roots in the minds of men, and could not be eradicated but with difficulty. To that old revolutionary spirit of the Swedes which, in their earlier history, had often displayed itself in the party-contests of their high aristocracy, a wider field was now opened by the Reformation introduced by the court; and, armed in the Protestant cause, this spirit found fuller scope in the troubles of Poland,



in its connexion with Prussia and other states, and, above all, in the great religious war of Germany. When at a later period, and after the Swedish ascendancy in Europe had passed away, this spirit became compressed within narrower limits, and was thrown back upon itself, it then broke out into many violent internal commotions.

It was only under the successor of the despotic Henry that Protestantism was really introduced into England; but it there appeared under two different forms, and with two parties in a state of mutual and violent hostility. In England Episcopacy was retained; but in Scotland, the Puritans, the Methodists of those days, had the ascendant. But, under Queen Mary, the wife of Philip II., King of Spain, a Catholic reaction took place; and this again was succeeded by a Protestant reaction under Elizabeth, whose steady and inflexible policy alone consolidated the establishment of Protestantism—a policy at whose shrine the head of the unhappy Mary Stuart fell a sacrifice. Thus things proceeded from one extremity to another—from the execution of King Charles I. to the establishment of a Republic, and the absolute sway of a Protector—till amid the various disputes of the Scotch and English Protestants, and the various struggles of national rivalry, the court fell back upon Catholicism. At last King William, from Holland, a century before the breaking out of the French revolution, gave the final triumph to Protestantism, and brought to maturity the glorious constitution of that island, which has been so repeatedly transplanted, imitated, and modified, on the continent and in other parts of the world. On this basis a thorough Protestant policy was established, which affected even the public and international law of Europe—a policy which has so eminently characterised England in modern times, particularly during the period of her great power, and which was followed, or even accompanied, by a Protestant philosophy. I should premise that this Protestantism in philosophy should not by any means be confounded with, but should carefully be distinguished from, the revolutionary philosophy—from an unbridled anarchy in science and speculation, though the former, in its corruption, may easily degenerate into the latter. For the modern Paganism—the avowed Atheism of the eighteenth century—acquired

many more partisans, and assumed a far bolder attitude, on the continent than in the constitutional island, which, even in philosophy, oscillates in a sort of artificial equipoise between truth and error.

In the Netherlands, Protestantism was indeed a strong co-operative cause, but not the only cause of the rupture with Spain; for even in earlier times the Burgundian spirit had been prone to turbulence, and the arbitrary rule of the Spaniards had excited in other countries also general dissatisfaction, aversion, and resistance. When the Protestant half of the Netherlands had separated from Spain, and had established the sovereign and independent state of Holland, the latter ever exerted a powerful influence on England in all religious and political matters, in the same way as Belgium has ever exercised a marked influence over France. But in Holland, Protestantism did not give rise, as in Germany and England, to any events of a new and peculiar character, if we except the general toleration of religious sects, which was there carried to a further extent than in any other state.

In her own interior, Spain had an arduous problem to solve—she had to overcome the old energetic resistance of a whole people,—the tolerably numerous descendants of the former lords and conquerors of the country, who still adhered to the Arabian manners and language, and even in part professed the doctrines of Mohammedanism. This struggle, which commenced under Philip II. by very severe laws against the Moriscoes, terminated, under Philip the Third, with the barbarous expulsion of the whole Moorish population to the coasts of Africa. That from the intimate and manifold relations which existed between Spain and Germany under Charles V., the armies of the Emperor may have introduced into Spain the opinions of the new German Gospels to a greater extent perhaps than can be now stated with certainty, or than is now susceptible of minute and accurate proof, is by no means improbable; and this fact would serve to explain, though not entirely to justify, many acts of the Spanish government. At any rate, the Spanish mind and character, in other respects so generous and upright, so little prone to selfish cunning or fickle frivolity, became, in the long strife and animosities of a fierce

religious war, more and more partial and exclusive, arbitrary and violent. There yet lingered, however, many chivalrous virtues peculiar to this high-minded nation—many extraordinary and lofty effusions of religious genius, such as are displayed in the wonderful writings of St. Theresa, whose holy meditations are couched in language of such inimitable beauty. Among no other people did the spirit and character of the middle age, in its most beautiful and dignified form, so long continue and survive in manners, ways of thinking, intellectual culture, and works of imagination and poetry, as among the Spaniards; and it is not the mere effect of chance, but it is a very remarkable and characteristic fact, that in Spain alone the peculiar poetry of the middle age attained to its utmost perfection, and reached its last exquisite bloom.

In Italy, too, art and poetry flourished in her beautiful language; and classical erudition made considerable progress, and even arrived to a very advanced state, during that troubled period when the rest of Europe was involved in religious disputes and civil wars. But the fair and flourishing Italian literature of that age may be compared to a blooming garden, situated on a volcanic soil. No immediate danger then threatened Italy, though we are not to estimate private opinions by the standard of those which publicly prevailed; there were at least no public examples of that excessive partiality and passionate enthusiasm for Pagan antiquity, which occurred in that earlier and brilliant period of moral ferment and false security—the fifteenth century. On the contrary, in some individual instances the real progress of science was impeded, and on the whole its march retarded, by a dread of the danger of its abuse; and hence the old scholasticism remained longer than was right in hereditary possession of its exclusive empire, although that contentious and partly negative Rationalism of the middle age was ill calculated to supply the place of a truly Christian philosophy, which the circumstances of the church then so imperiously demanded. It should then have been borne in mind, that every new error—every new shape which the old Proteus may assume in the changing spirit of time, requires, not indeed a new philosophy (for philosophy itself, which is, as the ancients said, the science of divine and human things,



is in the sanctuary of its highest subjects and problems an edifice unchangeable through all ages, and built on the everlasting foundation of divine truth), but a new form and direction given to philosophy, a new resuscitation of its powers. Indeed, the venerable bishop and holy man of God, St. Charles Borromeo, had in his *Manual of Religion* furnished an example, in which we see the utmost profundity of ascetic science united with a beautiful lucidness of expression, and the greatest simplicity and purity of taste. But the regular philosophy of the schools remained for a long time yet much too scholastic; and it was prejudicial, or at least disadvantageous, to the Catholic cause, that the first foundations of a better philosophy, of one at least more faithful to its high vocation, and of an enlarged and improved science, should have been laid by men, like Bacon and Leibnitz, who belonged to the opposite party.

Protestantism had penetrated into France from French Switzerland, as the very name of Hugonots indicates. The religious wars in France broke out much later than in Germany; and the religious disputes in that country had this distinctive character; that the princes and noble leaders of the opposition, the factious among the high aristocracy, and the contending parties at court, made the Protestants (who formed, indeed, only the minority among the people, and still more in the state, but yet a very important and powerful minority), the tools and instruments of their own political designs and intrigues. It is this peculiar combination of circumstances which has stamped the character of the French religious wars, and which distinguishes them from those of Germany. The religious wars in the former country were not of such long and uninterrupted duration, nor were they of so destructive and desolating a character as the thirty years' war. On the other hand, the treaties of religious pacification were of much shorter duration, and were renewed even five or six times, for they were ever followed by new insurrections. Even the edict of Nantes, which was destined to terminate this long anarchy, did not prevent the recurrence of troubles after the assassination of Henry IV., and was itself totally repealed at a subsequent period. The various political intrigues of discontented nobles, and of factious leaders of the Opposition, gave a very hateful com-

plexion to the religious wars in France ; and that disposition to vindictive retaliation, which swayed parties in the various alternations of power, presented formidable and almost insurmountable obstacles to the establishment of a permanent religious peace. That odious character in the religious wars of France appears in England under equally revolting colours in the despotism of the eighth Henry, in the crafty policy of Elizabeth, in the great anarchical and regicide rebellion, and in the tyranny of Cromwell, and has been often and strongly portrayed by the national historians. It is extremely worthy of remark, as the fact serves to explain many posterior events in history, that the struggle in France remained undecided, partook from first to last of an uncertain and fluctuating character, and led neither to the establishment of a free Constitution, as in England, nor to the foundation of a firm, lasting, and irrevocable religious pacification, as in Germany. But this struggle remained an unsolved problem of state-policy, like the religious dispute itself—a dispute whose contagion infected the Catholics themselves, inoculated that portion of the population, and continued to rage among their descendants. In France, the Protestants were in a decided minority, and it was by other and subordinate causes that they acquired a temporary power and importance in the first religious wars ; but in England they probably became the majority at a very early period, though not such an overwhelming majority as they form at the present day.

The Catholic and Protestant parties then divided Germany into two nearly equal portions, as in point of numbers they do at the present day ; and although political power does not depend on numbers, particularly when, as was at that time the case, so many heterogeneous elements were combined, yet both the contending parties were sufficiently strong not to succumb easily in the contest. It is this fact which ultimately established the necessity of a cordial and permanent religious peace, and caused that necessity to be so universally acknowledged. But this very equality of numbers, and still more the active interference of almost all the great continental powers in the contest, rendered it at first more obstinate and lasting. Never was there a religious war so widely extended and so complicated in its

operations, so protracted in duration, and entailing misery on so many generations. That period of thirty years' havoc, in which the early civilisation and the noblest energies of Germany were destroyed, forms in history the great wall of separation between the ancient Germany, which in the middle age was the most powerful, flourishing, and wealthy country in Europe, and the new Germany of recent and happier times, which is now gradually recovering from her long exhaustion and general desolation, and rising again into light and life from the sepulchral darkness—the night of death, to which her ancient disputes had consigned her.

We can be little astonished at the origin of this war—indeed, it is almost a matter of surprise that hostilities did not break out sooner; and the very fact that external warfare was so long suppressed may account for the violence and animosity of the first conflict. The first religious peace was in reality a mere truce—another prolonged interim, which still left many debateable points, that with the most honest intentions in both parties it was extremely difficult, and almost impossible, to settle by a peaceful and equitable adjustment. Where so much combustible matter existed, the merest accident might enkindle a conflagration. This first occurred in Bohemia, where the old insurrection of the Hussites had been put down by force, (the only way in which, on its first outbreak, it could have been suppressed), but where as it now appeared that no vital remedy had been applied to the roots of the disorder, much diseased and inflammable matter yet remained. Still the revolt of Bohemia was not the only cause or subject of a war, which some historians have considered rather as a complicated series of wars, partially varying in their object. The whole country—the age itself seemed involved in warfare; and war appeared as the permanent policy, the ruling spirit, the inveterate habit, and natural necessity of mankind. As a masterly hand\* has seized and portrayed many events and incidents—many scenes and acts of this great tragedy—the religious feelings, and steadfast and inflexible character of the Emperor Ferdinand II., the high military glory and conquests of the Swedish monarch Gustavus Adolphus, and the genius and disastrous fate of the General Wallen-

\* The author here alludes to the Thirty years' war by Schiller.—*Trans.*



stein, it is unnecessary to dwell at any length on these great historical recollections, though the subject is inexhaustible in itself. The peace which was the fruit of a high and imperious necessity is, in the point of view we here take, of far greater interest.

With respect to indemnities, the treaty of Westphalia did not differ from any other treaty of general peace in which lands and parcels of land are to be allotted, and even secularized, but where the number of claimants exceeds the portions of allotment. Considered, too, as a treaty which restored, and fixed on a firm basis, the peace of the German empire, the treaty of Westphalia did not depend in this, as in other respects, on the force of its own articles, but on the general system of European policy—on the principle of the balance of power which regulated that policy—a principle which then, and still more in later times, this treaty has much contributed to diffuse and extend. But it is as a solemn pact of religious peace that I wish here particularly to consider the treaty of Westphalia—as the final conclusion of all religious wars (and in this respect it has never been materially violated)—as a lasting covenant of religious freedom, whose main principle continues deeply implanted in the German mind, while the two other relations in which this treaty remained so incomplete have for the most part lost their practical interest. When we contemplate, too, this treaty as a noble labour of equity, the successful work of unwearied industry, it has no parallel among preceding treaties of peace; and hence it has become the basis of the international law of Europe, and the text-book of diplomatic science in modern times even down to our own days. Hence its long, undisturbed duration. The nations, the age itself, blessed it as the termination of their long calamities; but far greater has been its influence on after-times. The religious peace which it established has become in modern times a national habitude—a second nature to the German people; for here and no where else must we look for its high historical destination. It may be said that this, like every other peace where the question of right remains the subject of dispute, is only a truce—another mere interim; but it is a sacred and eternal truce—a divine interim—that is to say, an intermediate state of peace to last till God shall pronounce his final and unfailing award.

Of little moment to the philosopher, who considers this religious peace in its vast bearings on the past, the present, and the momentous future, is the reflection of the jurist, how far and under what restrictions this treaty, in the altered circumstances of recent times, can be considered as really valid and politically binding. For more than any other treaty has this solemn pact of religious peace been interwoven with life, and become a reality. And when we take a wide survey of the world, and include the future in our prospective ken, we may say, that now that most of the separate articles of this treaty have lost their value, and are no longer susceptible of execution, the general spirit and object—the high import of this religious peace are much nearer their fulfilment than formerly, when the practical application of this treaty to particular cases was solely considered. For that outward but lasting covenant of religious peace—that holy truce and interim forms the prelude and introduction to another, higher, far more comprehensive, spiritual and divine peace, for which our age—the epoch of a mighty regeneration—is irrevocably destined. For how can Christianity, that is to say, eternal truth itself, be for ever torn by divisions? The solution of the great problem of the last three hundred years is by no means complicated, if we understand it in this sense, but extremely simple. For if, as it is the object of all true and elevated philosophy to prove, faith and science are really and essentially one, faith will be restored to its former unity, and then the schism between faith and science will cease.

Even as regards the political relations of the present times, this great, fundamental treaty of peace has become a new Christian basis of international law; for the spirit of Christianity requires that where absolute justice, which is rarely attainable, cannot be found, a system of peaceable and equitable compromise should before all things be preferred. And hence this treaty has, for all succeeding times, stamped the pacific and conservative policy of the great German power of Austria. In France and England, indeed, religious wars afterwards occurred; but they were merely the last agitations—the after-pains of that fearful period of convulsive labour. These commotions were soon allayed; and the example and precedent of this great religious pacification in Germany, highly and universally admired as it was,

caused the principle of religious toleration to be tacitly acknowledged as one which religion and necessity alike prescribed for the imitation of all Europe.

Among the last and most frightful consequences of the general revolution in the church was the calamitous execution of King Charles the First, which, for the sake of order, I have previously adverted to, and which took place a year after the establishment of the great religious peace in Germany, and was followed forty years afterwards by the great national peace of England—the final settlement of the British constitution. Among the lamentable events which occurred at that period in France was the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the last and, comparatively speaking, the most solid and durable of the treaties of religious peace made in that country—a revocation which can by no means astonish us, since this edict, destitute of all internal and external guarantees, and which emanated solely from absolute power, could not offer the same security, nor possess the same durability, as the great, fundamental treaty of Westphalia. Yet both in France and abroad, this measure, so appalling to the whole European world, was, after so long an interval, extremely unexpected. One of the effects of this measure was a cruel war of extermination carried on in the mountains of the Cevennes against the Protestants, who appear to have there derived a part of their tenets from some of the earlier sects of the middle age. With respect to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, considering it merely as an act of authority, and independently of the blow which it gave to the establishment of a permanent religious peace, we can only say that such an abuse of power on the part of the majority (and it is to the influence of a preponderant majority this act was ascribed by public opinion)—such an abuse of power was a very dangerous precedent in the native land of all violent reactions; and thus in our days the emigration of the French nobility has been the great historical counter-blow to the banishment of the Hugonots.

This violent expulsion of the Protestants could not even accomplish the immediate object of its authors; for the spirit of Protestantism had struck much too deep roots in France, and the evil could not be removed by mere physical force, and without the application of a moral remedy. The Pro-



testant influence of French Switzerland was not destroyed, and indeed it became still more powerful in the sequel; while a far deeper wound was inflicted on the Catholic cause in France by the spread of Jansenistical principles from the Netherlands, which, supported as those principles were by great literary talents, exerted then a mighty influence over the French nation. The essence of Jansenism was the Rationalism of Calvin, combined with feelings of pietism, and covered over with a deep varnish of Catholicism. It was not the small party of the Jansenists of Utrecht, excluded as they were from the Church, and completely separated from the two great religious parties of Europe, that could injure the Catholic cause in France; but it was that modified or disguised Jansenism which had crept into the very bosom of the Gallican Church, and there grew up in secret, that was most to be feared. All these partial or disguised influences of the spirit of Protestantism derived their full sanction from the theory of the Gallican Church, such as it was proclaimed by the supreme authority in the state. In the Protestant constitution of England, indeed, the principle of a national Church, like the Anglican (however such a principle may be opposed to the very essence and fundamental maxims of Christianity), is not inconsistent with the origin and general doctrines of that Church. But in the Catholic Church, where the principle of national dissent is not admissible to a like extent, such a system is perfectly absurd, and carries with it its own refutation. The older theory of a Germanic Church cannot be here adduced as an historical precedent; for that theory was started with a view to regulate the external relations of the Church, or to fix with more precision the limits of the Papal and Imperial power; but did not refer to matters of doctrine, or to the internal discipline of the Church. Yet with this system of a Germanic Church, in the period of the Ghibelline ascendancy, many errors were mixed up—the first germs of the schism afterwards consummated. But this disguised half-schism of the Gallican Church, not less fatal in its historical effects than the open schism of the Greeks, has contributed very materially towards the decline of religion in France, down to the period of the Restoration. It was not only the dispute with Rome, which Louis XIV. carried to such fearful extremes, but the alliances he so fre-

quently renewed with the Swedish conqueror and with the Turkish power (still so formidable to the whole of Christendom), which must, as coming from a Catholic quarter, have given much scandal to the age; and we must at least allow, that the foreign policy of Louis XIV. was scarcely in any respect Christian, and that it prepared the way for that relaxation of moral and religious principles which took place in France under his feebler successors. Louis XIV. undoubtedly well knew how to strengthen his regal prerogative, and render it more absolute; and in this work, like several of his predecessors, evinced the most systematic art, and the greatest determination of character. But all the great problems of that age—all the religious questions which then divided the world, which, forming as they did the highest object of all practical reflection and conduct, were then so warmly agitated—could not be brought to a permanent, adequate, and generally satisfactory solution by the capricious mandates of power, or the partial adjudications of regal authority. And if in this establishment of absolute power in the interior no regard is paid to the lawful rights either of foreign nations or of the people at home, what security is there that such a system will or can endure?

The splendour of the then French literature is one of the main pillars on which the glory of that reign and century depends—this literature, which attained so high a degree of perfection, contains, however, to some extent, the germs of that political scepticism, and those religious errors, which led to the disasters of subsequent times. An *Æsthetic* criticism of pure art falls not within the limits of the plan I have traced out to myself; and I can notice subjects of this nature only inasmuch as they serve to denote the character of particular ages and nations. As in no country was the spirit of the middle age—the scholastico-romantic character of the first period of European cultivation, both in the tone of feeling and the mode of expression, so long preserved, nor raised to such a state of high refinement and beautiful perfection as in Spain; so we may say that the peculiar characteristic of the French mind in the age of Louis XIV. consisted in a studious and minute avoidance of the two principal defects in the intellectual productions of the middle age—the scholastic vagueness and obscurity in works of speculation on the one

hand, and the fantastic wildness in works of imagination on the other. That choice and exquisite taste which prevails in all those models of secular and clerical, historical, poetical, and philosophic eloquence, which that age produced in such abundance, originated in this species of precision, averse from all excess and obscurity. And it was by the clearness and lightness it owed to this principle that the French language became, in the eighteenth century, the universal model and most convenient medium, not only of conversation, but of epistolary communication, among the polite classes of all European nations. But in a comprehensive survey of general literature, this standard of a pleasing style must not be considered as universally applicable, or higher than any other; and without wishing to compare objects totally dissimilar in themselves, I may observe, that although among all the classical writers and orators of that age, Bossuet is the greatest in point of style, and at the same time the most solid and intellectual, yet the *naïve* loquacity and infantine simplicity which distinguish the incorrect old French diction of St. Francis of Sales are peculiarly graceful and attractive in themselves; while in the depth and clearness of the ascetic spirit, the saint far surpasses the former writer more celebrated in the world.

In the regular philosophy of the schools, the Latin was mostly the prevailing language during the seventeenth century. In this the system of Descartes then formed an epoch, or at least obtained very general credit. His fanciful vortices in nature, as well as his rigid demonstration by reason, of that principle which is exalted above all reason, comprise rather the first germ of the various errors in the physics and metaphysics of the succeeding age, than a sound basis of true science, and a Christian philosophy of the human mind. Spinoza was the immediate disciple of Descartes; but it is in Germany alone that his rationalist system of pantheism, expressed as it is in the forms of mathematical demonstration, and embellished by a morality pure and noble, (at least in appearance and in its general outline,) has been justly appreciated in its true metaphysical import, and has found philosophic critics and imitators. But in its negative bearings, the philosophy of Spinoza, together with other writings by that inquirer and others on and against revelation, had a



very extensive influence in those times; and that philosophy forms the notable point of transition to the metaphysical speculations of our own age. Socinus had directed his attacks against the great mystery in the existence of the living God—the Christian dogma of the Trinity. In the system of Spinoza, philosophic Protestantism, or the progressive spirit of negation, advanced one step further; for he denied the personal existence or the living personality of God, and endeavoured to substitute for the notion of the Godhead the empty idea of the Infinite.

On the other hand, the systems of Bacon and Leibnitz were two different foundations laid in that age for a higher and a better philosophy—systems which by a more extensive development and harmonious combination of their parts might have been moulded into a frame of philosophy thoroughly Christian. Almost all the scientific labours of Leibnitz were directed to this point, namely, the demonstration, confirmation, and exemplification of the truths of Christianity, by the aid of science. The vast system of spiritualism, exalted far above all ideas of nature, which was propounded, or rather sketched out, by Leibnitz (with the exception of some peculiar opinions and mere hypotheses), agrees perfectly with that purer Platonism which all the Christian writers and fathers of the first ages inculcated. And the fundamental principles of such a philosophy, if exposed in their native clearness and simplicity, and without adventitious alloy, are the same which in their general spirit are to be clearly traced, or are tacitly implied, in the sacred Scriptures, whose lofty purposes, however, rise far above the narrow forms and limited sphere of philosophic investigation. How well Leibnitz understood and appreciated, and how far he subscribed to the truth of the Catholic religion, has been brought to light in a singular manner in our own days;\* and if we except some oversights, very pardonable under all circumstances, his philosophic sketch of the Catholic system of theology is, in its masterly brevity, one of the boldest and happiest expositions of that religion, at least for the general

\* The author alludes to the *Systema Theologicum* of Leibnitz, first published in Paris in the year 1819, from the manuscript sent by the court of Prussia to that of France. It was published by the Abbé Emery, who accompanied the Latin original with a French translation.—*Trans.*

purposes of the world. The other great celebrated philosophical system of modern times was based in the principles of the philosophy of experience—a system which has tended to enlarge almost immeasurably the field of natural discoveries. As the founder of the philosophy of experience, Bacon, had conceived it, that philosophy, if we except some particular defects and individual errors, is by no means at variance with the Christian philosophy of revelation; for the latter is in itself a philosophy of experience, though of another, higher, and spiritual kind. And it is the more necessary to keep this in view, as otherwise the ordinary abyss of Rationalism can scarcely be avoided. The case is widely different when the principles of the empirical philosophy, as in Locke and his followers, are directed against everything exalted, supernatural, and spiritual in man and his consciousness. By this important distinction, Bacon is an European philosopher, like Leibnitz; but Locke is a mere English philosopher, as it was in England this Protestant philosophy sprang up, and kept pace with the Protestantism of state engendered and nurtured by the constitution of 1688. However, in England, the Protestant philosophy, true to its character, kept within the limits of a mitigated scepticism, and did not plunge into the same wild, revolutionary excesses as the French philosophy of the eighteenth century, that started with the same principles.

The high intellectual cultivation of the English is by no means confined to this negative philosophy, but is of a very peculiar character, and, like the British constitution, combines in the most singular manner the most heterogeneous elements. For although the British constitution is generally considered as the fashionable model for our times, and in one respect may indeed be so considered; yet a powerful aristocracy and many parts of the feudal constitution of the middle age are there established in a sort of harmony, or at least permanent equipoise, with the more modern elements of commerce and democracy. The heroic spirit of chivalry, and the whole moral character of the middle age, were long paramount in England; and hence in the poetry of no country, if we except the Spanish, is that spirit so conspicuous. The struggles between the houses of York and Lancaster during the fifteenth century, which, in the rugged and almost savage sternness of

those heroic characters, bear no little resemblance to the contests of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, form the heroic and traditionary, though not very remote era of British history—an era which witnessed, too, the high military glory that England acquired in the many battles and chivalrous engagements fought on the French soil. The great national poet of England, who has taken the subject of many of his dramas from that glorious period of his country's annals, maintains a sort of sceptical medium—a kind of poetical balance between the romantic enthusiasm of elder times, and the clear-sighted penetration of modern ; and it is in this peculiar combination of qualities that the originality of his genius, his unfathomable depth and high intellectual charm, partly consist. As the constitution of England—that is, the balance of her social institutions—sprang out of the old and mighty struggles which had convulsed that country, we must not be surprised at finding in her higher poetry, which is only the image and reflection of life, the same artificial union and combination of the conflicting elements existing in her political organisation. A profound analysis of art, conducted exclusively with this view, and towards which the German mind has a strong and perhaps excessive inclination, would be foreign to my present plan. To point out the traits of analogy existing between the productions of intellect and the ages and nations to which they severally belong, may serve to throw a clearer and more vivid light on important periods and momentous epochs of history ; and it is with this view I have indulged now, as formerly, in short parallels of this kind. Down to the most recent times, this marked predilection for the romantic world of the middle ages and the chivalrous days, as well as the bold genius of poets bursting through all vulgar trammels, have been the distinctive character of English poetry, and have partly tended to make it so great a favourite with all the nations of Europe.

On the other hand, the negative philosophy of the English remains true to its character, in as far as, carefully shunning all objects of a higher nature, it has for the most part made it a principle to limit its views entirely to man, without attempting to dive and penetrate into the profound mysteries of the Deity, or into the internal secrets of nature. To this a high philosophy will object, man is no isolated being ; but



as he was originally placed by his Creator in nature, it is only in that connexion with God and nature that the mysteries of his inward being, and the history of his outward progress, can be fully understood and explained. In historical researches and narrations, when these are confined to special subjects and particular eras, and do not attempt the more comprehensive plan of the Philosophy of History, that confined spirit of philosophic investigation which limits its views exclusively to man is not prejudicial; for, on the other hand, the flexible powers of poetical genius (unless their activity be cramped by the sceptical influence of a Protestant philosophy), keep the mind alive to all high and generous qualities, characteristic peculiarities, and original greatness in men and events. Hence that department of British literature which embraces historic research and narrative is peculiarly fertile, and has met with a general and European success.

The Protestantism of state, which was brought to maturity by the English constitution, was during the eighteenth century, when England held generally the foremost rank among the nations, extended and applied in the system of the balance of power to the whole continent of Europe. But the Protestantism of science which originated there, formed, together with the system of religious peace, the first foundation of Illuminism; and denotes the whole period of its history from the commencement of the eighteenth century down to the French Revolution.

## LECTURE XVII.

Parallel between the religious peace of Germany and that of the other countries of Europe.—The political system of the Balance of Power, and the principle of false Illuminism prevalent in the eighteenth century.

THE great benefits of the religious peace of Germany, which, founded upon and springing out of a great historical necessity, has struck such deep roots in the public mind, and at last become a second nature to the Germans, may be best appreciated by a comparison with the state of religious liberty such as it now exists, or did recently exist, among other nations—and those, in truth, which are in every other respect the most civilised of modern Europe. In Germany, indeed, the strict and vigilant maintenance of that religious peace on which her whole political existence depends, and without which she would fall into an anarchic struggle of parties, has received in recent times a new confirmation; and this religious peace, which has been revived, not indeed in its old forms, but in its general spirit and essential import, has become only the more necessary, as, by the recent partitions of territories, a great intermixture of religions has been introduced into states where formerly one religion only prevailed. Thus in that state,\* which was originally the greatest of all the Protestant states of Germany, and is now even still more powerful than formerly, a full half of the population is Catholic. Nearly to the same extent the same observation will apply, though inversely, to that Catholic state† in Germany which, next to the Imperial state itself, is the greatest. So strongly has this Magna Charta‡ of the religious liberty of Germany (which scarcely needs any external securities, now that most of those securities no longer exist, or at least have been very materially altered in the forms under which they formerly existed in the

\* Prussia.

† Bavaria.

‡ The Treaty of Westphalia.

Confederation and in the Imperial courts of Judicature)—so strongly, I say, has this Magna Charta taken root both in the public mind and state-policy of Germany, that the principle of religious freedom no longer depends on the degree of population, or the relation of numbers. Thus, for example, in the German Catholic provinces of the Austrian Empire, the Protestants, though compared with the rest of the population form so very small a minority, have been long in possession of the most unlimited religious freedom; and in the country\* which was the very cradle of Protestantism, the fact that the royal dynasty and a very small minority of the nation profess the Catholic religion has been no obstacle to the most cordial, deep, and solid attachment on the part of the people to their old hereditary rulers—an attachment which has been evinced in the most unequivocal and affecting manner by all classes of the nation at every period of misfortune. If now we look to the other great states and civilised countries of Europe, which like Germany were involved for a century and more in the turmoil of religious wars, and consider what issue these wars have had, what results they have produced, we shall find that in England civil war indeed no longer rages. But how the relations between the Anglican church, on the one hand, which force alone maintains in its political privileges and ascendancy, and the Protestant dissenters (who have a different character from those in Germany, or elsewhere, and are distinguished by a very violent sectarian spirit) and the Catholic population of Ireland, on the other,—how these relations, I say, can be said to exhibit a state of religious peace, I am at a loss to understand; for at no very remote period the latter country was the theatre of a bloody civil war. We must at least allow that a solid and permanent internal peace, a perfect conciliation of minds, and an equitable adjustment of the respective rights and claims of both parties, have apparently not yet been brought to a quiet and satisfactory issue. Nay, to judge from those great parliamentary discussions in England, wherein not unfrequently, and from passages the most obscure, and the least observed by the superficial eye, the most secret motives, the deepest springs of policy, and the most hidden thoughts and disquietudes of the statesman come to light in that wonderful stage

\* Saxony.



of public life, it would appear that great self-apprehension reigned in the minds of English politicians; a fear which is the more likely to arise on every serious retrospect that people take of the old abyss of their civil contests; for, more than any other nation, they are conversant with their own annals, and have them ever before their eyes, and live in the past with all the intense feelings of the present. Hence every individual among them knows full well that the fearful and fermenting elements of their great old civil commotion have never been perfectly appeased, and finally allayed, but have been merely repressed from time to time, and prevented from breaking out anew, by means of a constitution, which on that account is reputed *glorious*. And must not every Englishman ask himself the peremptory question, how a country can be, or be termed, free, when its Catholic inhabitants, amounting to a third part of its entire population, are doomed to undergo indescribable tyranny, and are, in fact, treated like a conquered nation?\*

In France there prevails on matters of religion an indifference of feeling rather than any party contentions or violent animosities, at least among the greater part of the nation; and so long as the matter is not mixed up with political considerations, this feeling of indifference will bend to one opinion or to the other. Even in former times the religious wars, though violent enough, were not of so long and uninterrupted a duration and so widely destructive a nature as in Germany, and, comparatively speaking at least, were not attended with such frightful circumstances as in England. But, on the other hand, they did not lead to those mighty, definite, and permanent results, such as in Germany, a religious pacification—and in England, the establishment of a free constitution. And in the revocation of the edict of Nantes, accomplished in defiance of all antecedent promises, stipulations, and rights, the victory of the Catholic majority of the nation, unjust in itself, was merely apparent and illusive, for all the great problems of moral life remained unsolved, and the hostile and fermenting elements of Protestantism, or a species of semi-Protestantism, retained their full force; till, a hundred years after this arbitrary proceeding, an

\* The passing of the Catholic Relief Bill has happily rendered this observation obsolete.—*Trans.*

immense and formidable reaction occurred in the breaking out of the great Revolution. That grand conflict of the European nations which sprang out of this revolution, and attended its whole course, must be looked upon in no other light than as a religious war; for a formal separation, not only from the church, but from all Christianity—a total abolition of the Christian religion—was an object of this revolution, which lasted nine years before a sort of religious peace was established, by which it seemed to be acknowledged that religion, for a time at least, was not an absolutely superfluous want of the people; for the attempt of theophilanthropy, or the public and legal establishment of a pure rationalist religion, had no success. But as respected persons, this peace was not of long duration, as was but too soon apparent in the ill-treatment and imprisonment of the head of the church. The drama of the old Ghibelline times was renewed, and Ghibelline principles and maxims of policy were openly avowed. If the military success of the French had been of longer continuance, these principles would have made incomparably greater progress, and would have been more clearly unfolded, as there was a secret inclination to a certain Mahometan junction of civil and ecclesiastical power in the hands of the same person. It could not, however, have escaped the keen perception of Buonaparte how much the feelings and opinions of Europe (whatever indifference it may manifest about religion, and however easily it may give its sanction to encroachments on spiritual power, from want of knowledge or of interest in those matters) are ever adverse to a complete and anti-Christian fusion of secular and ecclesiastical authority. That fanatic and destructive character which distinguished the revolutionary struggle in its origin remained the same, though somewhat modified in its form, during the time of the Imperial conquests; and the general resistance of the nations of Europe, down to the final triumph of the allies, retained to the last the character of a religious war, carried on in defence of all that was most sacred to humanity. Thus that great struggle must be considered as a five-and-twenty years' religious war, or rather perhaps in its origin a war of irreligion, though it is not worth while to dispute about a word. For this reason, in the country where this mighty revolution had its birth, the

restoration of monarchy is inseparably connected with that of religion; and it is by a religious regeneration that the statesmen of that kingdom, who are well-wishers to their country, and have in view its permanent well-being, and not the idle and transient splendour of military glory, should endeavour to secure the future destinies of France.

This universal and convulsive crisis of the world in latter times, now that it has happily and entirely passed by, has created a mighty chasm, and thrown up a wall of separation between the present age and the eighteenth century. Now that the conflict is over, and all the illusions incident to that state of struggle have passed away, the eighteenth century, which bore that great revolution in its womb, and at last brought it into life, can be judged with greater impartiality and historic freedom, and better understood and more duly appreciated in all its comprehensive bearings. For during the existence of any struggle, it is apparently given to few mortals to form respecting passing events a judgment which can be truly termed historical; as in general a certain distance of time is requisite to the formation of just and accurate opinions. In this last section of universal history it would be idle and superfluous to enter into a minute detail of facts so generally known. It is on that account the more important for the due illustration and philosophic investigation of a period so near to us, briefly to point out, amid the multitude of well-known facts, the leading and determining causes of all the events which occurred. The leading and stirring principles of all occurrences and enterprises in the eighteenth century, as the history of that age abundantly proves, may be traced, on the one hand, to the system of the balance of power in the internal government and outward relations of states; and on the other, to the principle of illuminism in the department of morals, though this principle was not confined to the sphere of mind, but exerted a great practical influence on real life, and finally brought about a total revolution in the state. Both these principles—the system of the balance of power, which was the protestantism of state—and the principle of illuminism, which, from its negative character, agreed in the main with the protestantism of philosophy, and was only a natural consequence of that philosophy,—had their origin chiefly in England, and there first, or more than



elsewhere, reached their development. For from the commencement of the eighteenth century down to the mighty Revolution which closed it, England was the state that took the lead in every occurrence and transaction, gave the tone to the age, and formed the strong central lever to the system of the balance of power. The plan of such a system had indeed been openly avowed several centuries before, and had been acted upon as a principle in many political enterprises and negotiations; but the then existing circumstances of the world, which required and admitted of a far higher law of adjudication, confined the operation of this principle within very narrow limits. Thus it was a far higher principle of Christian equity which constituted the basis of the holy Roman Empire of Germany in the middle age; and it was only when that empire had been weakened and undermined by various shocks, external and internal, that the system of the balance of power began, towards the latter part of the fifteenth century, to exert a commanding influence. Italy was in general the theatre and arena for the workings of that policy; Spain, France, and Austria, next Venice, the Pope, and Switzerland, the active agents in that changeful struggle; and Naples and Lombardy, the subject of dispute and the prize of contention. But when the progress and success of the Turkish arms from without, and the formidable, growing, and fermenting elements of religious strife from within, had threatened Europe with total ruin, or at least with the most formidable danger, the new inferior principle of policy was compelled to yield to the urgent necessities of the times, and to old opinions not yet totally extinct. Men felt the absolute want of an emperor and general protector of Christendom, invested, as in ancient times, with power really adequate to his dignity; and this was the motive which led to the election of the Emperor Charles V. The extent of his empire, however, made his power appear greater than it was in reality. If a decided and formidable preponderance of power existed anywhere, we must look for it on the side of the Turks, whose triumphant arms brought them ever nearer towards Europe, and whose progress Charles was little able to arrest. France, situated as she was in the centre of Europe, had nothing to apprehend from the Turks, while she was sufficiently strong and powerful to disregard danger from any

quarter. Her rivalry with Spain, and her perpetual wars with the Emperor, were exceedingly injurious to Europe, as they cramped and impeded all the operations of the Emperor in behalf of Christendom, and all his exertions for providing for its external and internal security. But to no country were those wars more hurtful than to France herself, which had need of all her energies for the maintenance of internal tranquillity, in order, by her undivided activity, to be able to allay and settle the various elements of religious strife, which afterwards broke out with such fearful violence. At that period, and even during the seventeenth century, the wars of Turkey were generally considered as religious wars, partly from the dreadful consequences which ensued to the Christian religion in the conquered countries, where, if it were not entirely extirpated, it was at least doomed to the severest oppression; and partly from the fanatic and sanguinary character of those wars themselves. The alliances which France, during the religious wars of the seventeenth century, and contrary to the interests of her own creed, entered into with Sweden and Turkey, under pretence of maintaining the balance of power, were more than anything else prejudicial to the Catholic cause, inflicted a deep wound on Christian principles, and contributed much to mislead the opinion of the age. The final result of this policy was the establishment of a decided preponderance on the part of France towards the end of the seventeenth century—a preponderance which then at least must be ascribed to Louis XIV. only.

Now that the religious wars were terminated, this appeared the period proper for the establishment of the system of the balance of power—a system which must ever be called into action when every higher principle of international adjudication has ceased to be applicable; and which, as it was the source whence had emanated the whole moral and intellectual culture of the eighteenth century, attained now a more systematic form, and held a more brilliant and dignified place, than at any former period of history. England was the strong, central prop of the great lever for the European balance of power; while Austria, which in every age has been true to a pacific system of policy (although her moral existence depended on far higher principles of religion), formed on the Continent the other main stay to the system

of the balance of power, now become the universal principle of international policy. And this firm alliance between the two powers was in general the external basis of this system, independently of the many fluctuations which were inherent to its very nature. We must not, however, confound this principle of policy with a conservative and pacific system, acting according to existing and acknowledged rights; for although the former system be much akin to the latter, and both may easily and naturally co-operate in a common resistance to an overgrown power regardless of all right, still they are far from being one and the same, and differ widely in many characteristic properties, nay, in their very nature. The fundamental law of the conservative and pacific policy is right—not an abstract notion and pure ideal of absolute justice, by which the international policy of states is to be fashioned and regulated; but rather (if for the sake of greater clearness I may be allowed the use of a mathematical phrase) an applied right, that is to say, an existing and acknowledged right. For if we seek the first origin and ultimate foundation of all right and all justice, we must seek it in God alone, who is the eternal arbiter of the world, of states and nations as well as of individuals, and who well knows how to requite every great political injustice on his appointed day of retribution, to visit it with unexpected punishment, and to reduce it to its own nothingness by an often fearful award. But so soon as man, or any earthly power, presumes to lay its hand upon this work—to propose to itself absolute justice, to judge and regulate all things by that standard, and to model the world in conformity to it—the consequence is a total revolution in all the relations of society—an entire subversion of all existing order; and it is this false idea which is the principle or the pretext of all those fanatic attempts at universal conquest, and of every revolution not directed to the attainment of specific rights, but aiming at sweeping, unqualified, and universal change. It is only when in the general system of existing and positive international rights some occurrence has produced a chasm—some interstice appears—some particular question remains, or becomes anew, open and debateable ground—that a pacific policy, acting on the principle I have mentioned, can and will in such special cases revert to the original, pure, and eternal justice



of God. But in the material system of the balance of power, right and wrong are not the ultimate object, nor the sole criterion of political estimation, nor the sole rule of political negotiations; but the great object is the prevention or removal of any ascendancy which endangers or even threatens danger to the general interests of the powers. Both systems of policy may very well concur in their effects, and in most cases really do concur; for the establishment of political ascendancy is generally founded on the violation of existing rights, or may easily lead thereto. But this is not absolutely necessary; cases may easily be conceived where right is clearly on the side of ascendant might, as was once the case in the middle of the eighteenth century, and as happened in another way towards the beginning of the same age, when the cause of justice was espoused by preponderate power only. And in such cases, with a total disregard to justice, this system of the material balance of power will fling its weight into the opposing scale, in order to impede the progress of overgrown dominion. In another respect also the character and ordinary tendency of this system differ widely from that pacific policy which aims at the preservation of all existing and acknowledged rights. In the latter system, it is only the actual disturbance and real violation of the general peace of nations which can lead to the declaration of war. But, on the contrary, in the former system it is merely a formidable preponderance of power—a mere possibility of its abuse—a dread of future danger, which is deemed a sufficient motive for engaging in hostilities—a motive by which a state, where this is the exclusive principle of policy, is undoubtedly, as has often been objected to England, more easily and more quickly determined than any other: and such a motive may operate the more easily in a country like England, where those inducements for entering into war with more haste than is expedient or desirable are strengthened by the fact, that an insular and naval state, concentrated within itself, can carry on hostilities with all the advantages of peace and with the wonted activity of trade. England, during the eighteenth century, acquired the highest glory, and in general made a very beneficial use of her great power, in contributing to the general aid, security, and freedom of Europe; and in what is here said it is by no means

intended to cast a slur on or to undervalue the old and well-acquired power of Great Britain, as such a censure would be futile in itself and extremely misplaced here. But, for the right understanding of the peculiar political character and tendencies of an age like the eighteenth century, so near to our own times, it is necessary to observe, that the system of the balance of power is either merely the substitute for a higher principle, where the latter is no longer susceptible of application, or, in those cases where the latter hath really force, the system of the balance of power must be considered a mere supplement—a subordinate auxiliary for the settlement of incidental questions. But, with the great revolution which closed the eighteenth century there commenced an epoch of intellectual as well as political barbarism and desolation, to which the mere negative principle of an equilibrium of power, however it might be adequate to the ordinary relations of civilised states, was no longer applicable; for now a higher principle of moral and social reparation was needed. In no department of human activity can the positive power of evil be overcome by a mere negative principle of resistance, but solely by a principle of a homogeneous though loftier nature—a divine power acting within the same circle. A mighty religious war, which has shaken all moral existence to its centre, and convulsed it in all its depths, can be completely terminated only by a true religious peace. But such a peace depends on the moral force of principle, and not on the exact measurement of any physical equilibrium. As during the late frightful revolution the political relations of every state have been changed, and the whole balance of power in Europe been disturbed, no force can now easily alter or replace what has thus been established. Of this England herself may afford us an example. Certainly that great country in Southern Asia—the richest of all the countries in the world—and which Great Britain has annexed to her sway by means of a navy that gives her the empire of the seas, and whose population five or six times exceeds that of the ocean-queen, and equals in numbers the best half of Europe, has brought an accession of strength to England which cannot possibly be measured, judged, or condemned according to the old narrow rules of the system of the balance of power; since so many vast and important

results have accrued, and in all probability will yet accrue, to Europe and India herself from this most singular, and, in the history of the world, quite unprecedented connexion; and since, in other respects, not only the internal administration of Hindostan, but the entire conduct of the English in those transactions, has been at once so wise and glorious. As the shallow superficial notion of illuminism, which, during the greater part of the eighteenth century, was considered the all-ruling principle and highest object of all science and speculation, is no longer adequate to the present views of philosophy; in like manner the system of the balance of power has ceased to be any longer applicable to the state of Europe in the late general warfare, or to that state of things which it has given rise to; and it is not from this system we can expect the final settlement and adjustment of things, and the solution of the Gordian knot—the great enigma of the world in our times.

After the system of the balance of power, the next leading and characteristic principle in the history of the eighteenth century is the notion of illuminism, which exercised on the internal civilisation of all European nations the same influence which the former system exerted on their external relations. People are so accustomed to confound the principle of enlightenment with the abuse and false application made of it during the last century, that in order to represent this great epoch in all its historical bearings, I shall endeavour to shew that, to an impartial judge and observer, it offers many and diverse points for consideration; for we must remember that there was a true enlightenment by the side of a false one, and that enlightenment was not everywhere of a negative character, precipitate in its progress, and destructive in its effects. In its first obscure beginnings it had a solid, irreproachable, and very beneficial character and tendency. During the public calamities and general anarchy of the seventeenth century, the natural sciences in all their various branches made silent but very extraordinary progress; and numberless were the advantages of these new discoveries to all the useful arts and sciences, especially in those commercial and maritime states where such knowledge was mostly needed. A bold enterprising genius,\* heir to

\* Peter the Great.



the most splendid throne in the north, had, as an apprentice and artisan, appropriated on the spot all these advantages of modern civilisation, and turned them to full account in navigation, in the various mechanic arts, in the foundation of cities, and in the general civilisation of his subjects; and thus he became the founder of the present greatness of Russia—a greatness which is built on a species of enlightenment, that so far from being of a futile and rash nature, and of a destructive tendency, has exerted a gradual but beneficial influence over the whole extent of an empire which stretches far into two continents of the globe. It was only by that true and genuine improvement and civilisation which commenced under Peter the Great that Russia acquired the knowledge and mastery of her own resources, and thus rose to a high and permanent grade in the scale of nations.

The separation of the Russian church from the authority of the Greek patriarch, who had now fallen under Turkish dependence, appeared a necessary condition for opening a door in Russia to the moral and intellectual civilisation of Europe; nor when we consider that such a step was but the continuation of an original schism, can we deem it a subject of blame. It does not appear, however, that the system of a *national church*, which has sprung out of this separation, has been here as much abused as in the Anglican church, or in that system of antipapal opposition nearly akin to it adopted in one or more Catholic countries of Europe. The very system, however, of an exclusively national religion must ever be an object of the greatest solicitude; for it is but too easily susceptible of an extension most fatal to Christian government, which nothing so much impairs and undermines as any leaning to the Mahometan confusion of spiritual and temporal power in the hands of the same person.

Men have often blamed that harsh junction of opposites observable in the sudden and artificial civilisation of Russia; that is to say, the contrast which there exists between the highest intellectual luxury, and the most exquisite and fashionable refinement\* in thought and manners among the higher classes, at the court and in the capital, and the very low grade of civilisation, the state of utter or at least semi-barbarism, to which so large a portion of the population are reduced. But no very prejudicial effects have resulted to

society in Russia from this conjunction of elements, and from the obstacles which so many vast masses have opposed to the progress of civilisation; and even that hurry and precipitancy in the career of enlightenment, which was the great fault of almost all other European countries, was by this means avoided, or rather prevented by the very nature of things. The only thing here to be apprehended and guarded against was this, that in copying the civilisation of Europe, Russia should not introduce along with it those negative and destructive principles—those maxims of liberalism and irreligion, which were almost exclusively prevalent in European literature and science during the eighteenth century; in a word, that Protestantism (in the wide and comprehensive signification of that term) should not become too predominant in the public mind.

The first groundwork of the modern civilisation of Russia, as laid down by Peter the Great, was of a thoroughly practical nature, directed in part to objects of commercial utility, after the manner of the Dutch and English. The moral corruption occasioned by the French philosophy introduced under Catherine II. was confined to a small circle; and in the course of succeeding times, this philosophy came to be considered as an exotic element of destruction, which, so far from being adequate to the exigencies of the age, struck at the very root of society. In a more recent period, liberal and revolutionary theories of government, copied from constitutional countries, may at most have led to a criminal enterprise; but have not exercised any the least permanent influence on the bulk of the nation. But the great and essential point for this European and Asiatic Empire,—the seat of a progressive enlightenment,—as well as for the rest of Europe, is still this—that this enlightenment, which is the basis on which this empire is founded, should never take an irreligious course, but should ever maintain a decidedly religious character. And in this respect more than any other, a generous monarch\* who became great in the school of adversity, must be considered as the second founder of Russian greatness, because he has stamped on this empire a strong, permanent religious impress. I do not allude here of course to any fanatic measure of coercion, but to the moral influence of re-

\* The late Emperor Alexander.

ligion—to its firm establishment as the general principle of European government in the present times.

The principle of illuminism, when properly conceived, has nothing at all reprehensible in itself, or at variance with the Christian religion. In the same way that Christianity, if not only its dogmas were developed, but its general influence extended, and made triumphant in the world, would soon supplant the existing human reformation, and be the true, the divine reformation of mankind, of the world, and even of the visible creation; so it is itself the true illumination, whereof Holy Writ speaketh: it is that light of eternal light, which was in the beginning, and which was the life of men, (as the words from the mouth of eternal Truth declare,) and in which men are once more to find their life. But to descend from this lofty idea into the world of historical experience, we should carefully distinguish between a true, lasting, and vivifying illumination, and a false, mimic, and illusive species of enlightenment. One thing is the warm, genial light of the sun returning to the new-born spring, or the fresh glow of morning after the lengthened night—and another the transient glimmer of a bonfire, which after exciting a false alarm, sinks rapidly again into darkness. One thing is the solitary midnight lamp of silent meditation—and another the lightning which flashes athwart the gloomy heavens, or the dark lantern of the murderer stealing his way along in the night, or the torchlight in the robbers' cave, where the spoil is divided, and new misdeeds are concerted.

For all these various significations of true and false illumination, the eighteenth century in its real or pretended enlightenment may furnish us with historical proofs. Thus without misapprehending or disowning that true and divine light visible even in the progress of science, or without rejecting or contracting in too narrow bounds the salutary and necessary light of human reason, still we must be careful to distinguish from the former the light which is illusive or changeable, as well as that which is spurious, and counterfeited by the powers of darkness.

In this consists the sign of a false enlightenment—if not merely in its origin, and in its outward effects, but in its own nature as well as undeviating course, it retains a negative character, and is therefore hollow and superficial. But any



system which is originally destitute of a firm and solid foundation may easily be driven into an irregular and devious, and ultimately into a most fatal, course. This is, in short, the essential distinction observable in the progress of a genuine and a spurious species of enlightenment. This illuminism exercised so general an influence in the eighteenth century on church and state, on science and on social life, on the relations of policy and the course of public events, that even Spain and the Papal territories were not exempt from its influence—an influence which was perceptible, on the one hand, in many useful reforms in the internal administration of those states—and on the other hand, in the expulsion of the Jesuits, which was first commenced by Portugal and Spain, and to which the jealousy of other religious orders had contributed. But the whole transaction must be ascribed to a destructive party of illuminati, that had secretly grown up in those countries, and now expanded to public view, and appeared in full power. To such a party those religious orders which had fallen into a state of real degeneracy, inactivity, and ignorance, so far from being objects of hatred, were exceedingly welcome for the promotion of their secret views. But not so an order which was distinguished for its zeal and activity, its devotion to the interests of the church, its scientific acquirements, and knowledge of the world. A critical inquiry into the truth or falsehood of the several charges and accusations against the Jesuits must be reserved to a special history of those countries I have named, or to a particular history of the order. But their expulsion is here mentioned, as it is a very characteristic circumstance in the history of that age of pretended illumination. It may be generally thought that the determination which Pope Ganganelli at last came to for the suppression of the order was extorted from him by the overruling influence of the secular powers. But if such a supposition be really admissible, it is evident, on the other hand, that the restoration of the order was effected by the virtuous Pontiff who ruled the church in the late period of oppression, at the very moment when the iron yoke of military despotism weighed heaviest on the nations of Europe.

The true progress of Christian enlightenment in the pursuits of philosophy and science I shall have occasion to

mention afterwards. The principle of toleration, which was solidly established by the German treaty of religious peace, became an essential element of social illumination. By degrees this principle was admitted throughout almost all Europe—yet we must observe that its adoption cannot be determined by one uniform invariable rule in all countries, but that local circumstances, respecting which it is often difficult for the distant observer to come to a right judgment, must and ought to produce numerous modifications in the application of the principle. That wide toleration which in Holland and North America has for a long time incorporated into the state a multitude of petty sects, would not be practicable or expedient in other countries. The religious liberty which in the Russian Empire is extended even to Mahometans, and to certain tribes of Buddhists and Pagans, would not apply to the circumstances of most other civilised countries. There are in the deep-rooted habits of nations, and in the constitution of individual states, very peculiar, and often apparently singular, circumstances and combinations, which no man should judge of hastily, and according to abstract principles, until he has obtained a close, accurate, and deep insight into the historical condition and situation of a country. Thus while England is intolerant in her constitution at home, she gives the fullest latitude in Canada to the North American principle of religious freedom; and the whole British Empire in India is founded on toleration—that is to say, on the principle of governing the Indians according to their own laws, manners, customs, and opinions. By this policy the English have become almost complete masters of this great and fertile country; and their enlightened rule forms a strong contrast to the earlier tyranny of the Mahometans, who hold the Indian idolatry in the utmost abhorrence; although that idolatry, amid a chaos of errors and fables, contains many better and higher vestiges of ancient truth than the mere negative and fanatic superstition of Mahomet. Even the French, when they had a firm footing in India, committed a capital fault in forming alliances more with the Mahometans than with the native Indian powers.

In Europe, Norway alone, among the Protestant states, has maintained down to our times laws of severe exclusion against every religion differing from the established one—an

exclusion which extends as well to Jews as to Catholics; while Spain and Portugal only, among Catholic countries, offer an example of similar intolerance. To abolish suddenly, without urgent and overpowering reasons, or some new historical emergency, laws which have thus grown out of the general circumstances of a country, which have existed for ages, and have taken deep root in the manners and habits of life, provokes suspicion, and may occasion danger. But we must not suppose that a severe and exclusive system of legislation, like that existing in Spain, can always counteract the occult and far more dangerous opposition of secret sects and societies. This might be proved, or rendered probable, by many facts in the history of those countries during the eighteenth century. In Italy this rigid and exclusive legislation was never carried to the same unqualified extent. Intolerance there never extended to the Jews, nor to the Greek schismatics, and in recent times it does not, as formerly, affect the Protestants. In Germany, toleration was legally established by the treaty of Westphalia, and there the cause of toleration stood in no need of the modern principle of illuminism—the all-stirring and animating principle of the eighteenth century. But here illuminism in its first negative period was directed against prejudices and abuses of another kind. In certain Protestant countries in the north of Germany, this period of illumination dates from the abolition of trials for witchcraft. And against so modest a beginning not the slightest objection could be urged; for in general the criminal law which the later and already degenerate middle age bequeathed to modern times afforded ample scope for amelioration, and contained many barbarous edicts that deserved to be abolished. The use of torture, and of unchristian and excruciating modes of execution, were next the objects of reform. The total abolition of capital punishment, which this legal reform soon aimed at in its ulterior progress, the experience of mankind has not yet found to be either possible or practicable. Who will be disposed to deny that the many abuses which were now corrected, and the many vulgar prejudices which were refuted or done away with, were, especially at the outset, in a great measure such as were truly deserving of that name, and that very many of those reforms were useful and neces-



sary, just and wholesome? It appears, however, sometimes, that barbarous abuses thus hastily and precipitately removed soon re-appear under other forms and denominations. This may easily be the case, where those useful and necessary reforms are confined to the outward surface, and do not penetrate to the roots and internal essence of things. It is worthy of remark, that in the absence of solid and positive principles, the mere removal of abuses—a mere negative course of conduct—will never alone attain the desired end, nor is it in itself always safe and certain. Soon a rash and passionate precipitancy will be apparent in the conduct of affairs—the standard and real term of our exertions will be lost sight of, and things will fall into a ruinous course; and such is the character of that period of transition from the age of illuminism to the time of the French Revolution. Was there a single object, not only in the questions relating to humanity, but in the whole department of public life and general belief, in religion and in government, which was not soon regarded as a prejudice or an abuse?

In Germany, when the Empress Maria Theresa ascended the imperial throne, the long-established peace of the empire, which it had once cost such efforts to secure and preserve, appeared to the new school of philosophy a ridiculous prejudice of unenlightened pedantic burghers of state. But fifty years afterwards, during the atheistic and revolutionary period of the French philosophy, immediately prior to the French Revolution, as well as at its commencement, Christianity, and in fact all religion, was considered as a mere prejudice of the infancy of the human mind, totally destitute of foundation in truth, and no longer adapted to the spirit of the age; monarchy and the whole civilisation of modern Europe as abuses no longer to be tolerated. It was only when men had reached this extreme term of their boasted enlightenment that a re-action took place. But prior to this, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, and in the ten years immediately subsequent, the spirit of the age bore all before it in its irresistible progress. As in ancient times monarchs had competed for the title of Most Christian or Most Catholic, so now the potentates pre-eminent for power and understanding were flattered by the title of enlightened. It is not without a great shock to our feelings we

contemplate the close intimacy which subsisted between a monarch grown grey in the toils of war and the cares of state, a powerful empress of a northern court, and the most depraved champions of French infidelity. With respect to the third of those eminent potentates of the age of illuminism, Joseph II., it has never been denied by those most competent to form a correct opinion on this subject, that among the various measures and regulations passed in the short reign of that active emperor, although some are not entitled to the same praise, yet many were really adapted to the exigencies of the age, and have been attended with the most beneficial consequences to industry and to intellectual cultivation. But the serious turn which things afterwards took, the universal convulsion, and remodelling of the world, have long fully demonstrated that not one or two only, but many of the most active and enlightened sovereigns of that age yielded far too much to the prevailing principles of the time, and followed too readily the spirit of that age in its wild, rapid, and all-destructive career.

To the many elements of internal ferment already existing in France, the imitation of English manners under the regent, which was soon succeeded by an imitation of English literature and philosophy, added a source of equal danger. For to maintain within certain prescribed limits this English philosophy that reduces everything to the experience of sensation, the French wanted that sense of equilibrium innate in the English, and which their constitution had rendered almost instinctive to them; and by means of which in philosophy, as in their internal government, and in their relations with foreign states, they can keep within bounds; and with them a philosophy, however unspiritual and ungodly, does not so rapidly rush into a headlong and destructive course as it did in France and in Europe during the atheistical and revolutionary period of literature and science; for the deadly influence of this spirit was not confined to France—the land of its birth—but spread over every country. This is the important and essential distinction between the philosophy of Locke or of Hume, for example, which I before designated as the protestantism of philosophy, in opposition to the thoroughly revolutionary philosophy of French atheism—for though the former, by its opposition to all spiritual ideas, is of

a negative character, yet most of its partisans and champions contrive to make some sort of capitulation with divine faith, and to preserve a kind of belief in moral feeling. The French philosophy was, in fact, a new pagan idolatry of nature, and even the most splendid discoveries of natural science, which might and ought to have pointed to a higher principle, were not contemplated in their true spirit, nor employed to proper advantage, but were even made the instruments of a fanatic hostility towards the Deity. Even among the comparatively better natural philosophers of France, materialism was too generally the basis of their science, and a sensual enthusiasm for nature too much the prevailing tone of their writings.

The more brilliant the talents which led the way in this new impious and revolutionary career of the European mind, the more generally pernicious was the result. Such was the case with that scoffer whose genius could adapt itself to all the forms, moods, and styles of the old French literature, and who wielding, as he did, with so masterly a hand the weapon of a lawless wit, directed it without intermission during his whole life against everything holy and venerable, of what nature and kind soever. As those errors are the most dangerous which, as containing a portion of truth, carry with them a greater power of conviction; so Rousseau has perhaps exercised a more fatal influence than that other spirit, who with his mockery polluted all things. We cannot precisely term him unchristian—at least, such an epithet cannot be applied to him in the same unqualified and universal extent; and when compared with the Atomical philosophy and the Atheistical idolatry of nature, his fanatic worship of nature will be found of a more spiritual cast. The great eloquence of this man entitles him perhaps as clearly to the first rank among the orators of his nation during the eighteenth century, as Bossuet with very different religious principles holds in his own age. Eloquence less powerful than Rousseau's could not well have sufficed to draw his age into an admiration for that savage equality which he preached up—to have excited its enthusiasm for the state of the Caribees and the Iroquois, which, looking back with regret to man's original happiness in the pure freedom of nature, he represented as his proper destiny, utterly marred as he was



by European civilisation. This was not a mere idle freak of imagination, such as any false enchantment of romance might display—but Rousseau endeavoured to demonstrate, with all the rigid deductions of mathematical proof, the happy equality of the savage state; and, with the most earnest conviction and blind fanaticism, his system was applied to the actual relations of life. The result was that period of godless freedom—freedom separated from God and from every divine principle, whether of conduct or belief, and which, as usual, was soon succeeded by the false unity of a crushing despotism, equally hostile to every heavenly and exalted motive of human action. But such has been the frightfully accelerated march of events in these latter times, that the former stages of the revolutionary course in ancient Rome—the attempt of the elder Brutus—the establishment of a republic—the wars with the rival Carthage—the rapid career of military conquests—and the transition to despotism, down to Tiberius or Dioclesian—have been here traversed in the short period of scarcely one generation. It would be unjust always to term this the French Revolution, or to consider it exclusively as such; it was a general political malady—an universal epidemic of the age. In Holland and Belgium a revolution had previously broken out—the Polish Revolution occurred about the same time; but though the Belgian, and more particularly the Polish Revolutions, were of a totally different character from the French, they still presented to the turbulent spirit of the age one example more of political commotion. But North America had been to France and the rest of Europe the real school and nursery of all these revolutionary principles. Natural contagion, or wilful propagation, spread this disorder over many other countries; but France continued to be the centre and general focus of revolution.

Even when the whole power of the revolution had been concentrated in the person of a single man, its general march was not materially changed. With respect to foreign states and countries, the French Revolution produced a protracted religious war of twenty-one years; for it was such not only from its origin, but from its revolutionary and destructive character, and from its fanatic opposition to everything holy. There was a fixed principle at the bottom of this modern Paganism. It was political idolatry—and it matters

little what may be the immediate object of this idolatry—what the idol of the day, whether a republic and the goddess of reason—the *grande nation*—or the lust of conquest and the glory of arms. It is still the same demon of political destruction—the same anti-christian spirit of government, which wishes to mislead the age, and control the world. The great religious war, which has desolated all Europe, can be finally terminated only by a new and general religious peace; but the great gulf of perdition to our age is that political idolatry, whatever shape it may assume—whatever name it may bear. Until that idolatry be abolished, until that abyss of ruin be closed up, the house of the Lord, where peace and righteousness embrace each other, can never be founded on a renovated earth.

END OF LECTURE XVII.



## LECTURE XVIII.

On the General Spirit of the Age, and on the Universal Regeneration of Society.

“ I come soon, and will renew all things.”

THERE are, in the history of the eighteenth century, many phenomena which occurred so suddenly, so instantaneously, so contrary to all expectation, that although on deeper consideration we may discover their efficient causes in the past, in the natural state of things, and in the general situation of the world, yet are there many circumstances which prove that there was a deliberate, though secret, preparation of events, as, indeed, in many instances has been actually demonstrated. I must now say a few words on this secret and mysterious branch of illuminism, and on the progress it made during the period of its sway, in order to complete the sketch of that period, and to shew the influence of this principle, both in regard to the origin and general spirit of the revolution (which in its fanaticism believed itself a regeneration of the world), and in regard to the true restoration of society founded on the basis of Christian justice. But there is this peculiar circumstance in this historical inquiry, that those who as eye-witnesses could best speak from their personal experience, cannot always be considered the most credible vouchers; for we never know, or can know, what their particular views and interests may lead them to say or conceal, to suppress wholly or in part. However, it has so happened, that, in the universal convulsion and overthrow of society, many things have come to light on this mysterious and esoteric clue in modern history — things which when combined together furnish us with a not incorrect, and a tolerably complete, idea of this mighty element of the Revolution, and of illuminism both true and false, which has exercised so evident and various an influence on the world. And it is



only on such historical grounds (which are quite sufficient for our purpose, and can alone be made the matter of consideration here), I am at all competent to pronounce an opinion on this subject, or, as I should rather say, to give an account of this event; and it is from historical sources, references, and facts alone, that the following sketch has been taken.

As to the origin of this esoteric influence, the impartial historical inquirer cannot doubt (whatever motives or views some may have to deny the fact, or throw doubt on its authenticity) that the order of Templars was the channel by which this society in its ancient and long-preserved form was introduced into the West. The religious *Masonic* symbols may be accounted for by the Solomonian traditions connected with the very foundation of the order of Templars; and indeed the occasion of these symbols may be traced in other passages of Holy Writ, and in other parts of sacred history, and they may very well admit of a Christian interpretation. Traces of these symbols may be found in the monuments of the old German architecture of the middle age. Any secret spiritual association, however, diffused at once among Christians and Mahometans, cannot be of a very Christian nature, nor long continue so. Nay, the very idea of an esoteric society for the propagation of any secret doctrines is not compatible with the very principle of Christianity itself; for Christianity is a divine mystery, which, according to the intention of its divine Founder, lies open to all, and is daily exposed on every altar. For this reason, in a Revelation imparted to all alike, there can be no secrecy, as in the Pagan mysteries, where, by the side of the popular mythology and the public religion of the state, certain esoteric doctrines were inculcated to the initiated only. This would be to constitute a church within a church—a measure to be as little tolerated or justified as an *imperium in imperio*; and in an age where worldly interests and public or secret views of policy have far greater ascendancy than religious opinions or sentiments, such a secret parasitical church would unquestionably, as experience has already proved, be very soon transformed into a secret directory for political changes and revolutions. That in this society the unchristian principles of a negative illumination, veiled as they often were in sentiments of universal

philanthropy, were of a date tolerably modern, all historical analogies would lead us to suppose. On the other hand, the Christian opinions which survived in this order (though in our times, amid the innumerable factions which have agitated this society by their contests, the adherents to Christian principles form a small minority of its members)—the Christian opinions surviving in this order partook, conformably to the historical origin I have assigned, more of an oriental and Gnostic character. The great, or at least not inconsiderable, influence which this society exercises in politics, we may discover in those revolutions which, after having convulsed our quarter of the globe, have rolled onwards to the new world, where the two principal revolutionary factions in one of those South American states, whose troubles are not yet terminated, are called the Scots and the Yorkists, from the two parties which divide the English Masonic lodges. Who does not know, or who does not remember, that the ruler of the world in the period just passed made use of this vehicle in all the countries he conquered, to delude and deceive the nations with false hopes? And on this account he was styled by his partisans the man of his age, and, in fact, he was a slave to the spirit of his age. A society from whose bosom; as from the secret laboratory of Revolution, the Illuminés, the Jacobins, and the Carbonari have successively proceeded, cannot possibly be termed, or be in fact, very beneficial to mankind, politically sound, or truly Christian in its views and tendency. Still I must here observe, that it has been the fate of the oldest of all secret societies, that its venerable forms, which are known to all the initiated, should serve as a cloak to every new conspiracy. In the next place, we must not forget that this order itself appears to be split and divided into a multitude of different sects and factions; and that on this account we must not suppose that all those fearful aberrations and wild excesses of impiety, all those openly destructive or secretly undermining principles of revolution, were universally approved of by this society. On the contrary, such a supposition would be utterly false, or at least very exaggerated. The mere notice of all the highly estimable characters, mistaken but on this point—of most distinguished and illustrious personages in the eighteenth century, members of this association—would suffice to annul,

or at least materially modify, this sweeping censure. From many indications, we may consider it certain, or at least extremely probable, that in no country did this esoteric society so well harmonise with the state and the whole established order of things as in that country where all the conflicting elements of morals and society are brought into a sort of strange and artificial equipoise—I mean, England. If now we turn our view to the continent of Europe, and even to those countries which were the chief theatre of the revolution, we shall see that there, among many other factions, a Christian party had sprung up in this society—a party which, though it formed a very small minority in point of numbers, possessed, by its profounder doctrines and the interesting fragments of ancient tradition it had preserved, a great moral ascendancy; and this, many historical facts, and many written documents, which have since obtained publicity, place beyond the shadow of a doubt. Instead of bringing forward the names of some German writers less generally known, I prefer to allege, in confirmation of what I have said, the example of a French writer, who well denotes the internal and more hidden character of the revolution. The Christian theosophist, St. Martin, who was a disciple of this school, stands in his age quite apart from the other organs of the then prevailing atheistical philosophy. He was, however, a most decided revolutionist (but a disinterested fanatic, guided entirely in his conduct by high and moral motives), from his utter contempt and abhorrence for the whole moral and political system of Europe, as it then stood—a contempt in which, if we cannot entirely agree with him, we cannot in many instances withhold from him at least a sort of negative approbation; and, secondly, he was a revolutionist by his enthusiastic hope of a complete Christian regeneration of society, conceived indeed according to his own views, or the views of his party. Among the French writers of the restoration, none have so thoroughly understood this remarkable philosopher, and so well known how to appreciate him in all the depths of his errors, as well as in the many excellent things which his writings contain, and to apply to him the necessary corrections, as Count Maistre.

This secret clue in the history of the revolution must not be overlooked, if we would wish to form a due estimate of



its character; for it greatly contributed to the illusion of many by no means ill-intentioned persons, who saw, or wished to see, in the revolution but the inevitable, necessary, though in its origin harsh and severe, regeneration of Christian states and nations, then so widely gone off from their original destination. This illusive notion of a false restoration of society was particularly prevalent during the imperial sway of that extraordinary man, whose true biography—I mean, the high moral law of his destiny, or the theological key to his life—seems still to exceed the critical powers of our age. Seven years were allotted him for the growth of his power—for fourteen years the world was delivered over into his hands; and seven years were left him for solitary reflection, the first of which he misemployed in embroiling the world anew. On the use he made of the extraordinary power that had been imparted to him—of that formidable dominion which had fallen to his lot, history has long pronounced her sentence. Never is such power permitted but in the period of, and with a view to, some awful reckoning, and a still more fearful probation of mankind. But if his restoration—that is to say, the restoration which his infatuated partisans attributed to him—was most certainly a false one, the question naturally occurs, whether the restoration attempted by his successors has been perfectly sound, or at least quite complete; and what may be the defects in the new system, and how they may be supplied?

A mere treaty of territorial arrangements could not and can never constitute a great religious and international pacification for the whole of Europe. The re-establishment of subverted thrones—the restoration of exiled sovereigns and dynasties, will not in themselves have any security nor permanence, unless based on moral principles and maxims. After the severe unexpected lesson again inflicted on Europe, religion was at last made the basis of European policy; and we must not make it a matter of reproach that this principle still retained so indefinite a character; for this was necessary at the beginning at least, in order to remove any misconception, or any possible suspicion of interested views. And not only doth the stability and future existence of the whole Christian and civilised world depend on this bond of religious confederacy—which we can only hope may be ever more

and more firmly knit—but every great power in particular is more especially called upon to take a part therein. That the moral strength and stability of the Russian empire mainly depends on religion—that every departure from its sacred spirit must have the most fatal effects on its whole system, has already been declared by her late monarch, distinguished alike in adverse and in prosperous fortune, an axiom of state-policy, and can scarcely ever be again forgotten. But in that country, where the elements of Protestantism (to use that word in its most comprehensive signification) obtained such weight in the outset of its literary refinement, and are so incorporated with the whole political system of the state, the toleration extended to every form of worship should not be withheld from that church, which is the mother-church of the rest of Europe, and of Poland inclusively ;\* nor should the religious liberty of individuals be in that respect at all restricted.

It is equally evident that in that country of Europe where monarchy has been restored, the restoration of religion must go hand in hand with that of monarchy, and that the latter would lose all security were the former removed. In the pacific monarchy,† unchangedly attached as she is to her ancient principles, religion has ever been, more than any other principle, the recognised basis of her existence. As to the fifth‡ Germanico-European monarchy recently created, the solid maintenance of religion is the only means to allay the disquiet incident to such a state, and to secure its future existence. Any act of even indirect hostility towards the Catholic body—one half of the nation§—any infringement on the liberty of individuals in that sacred concern—a liberty which must be guaranteed not only by the letter of the law, but by real, effective, and practical measures—would not only be in utter opposition to those religious principles, rapidly spreading as they are in all Europe, and particularly in Germany, but would violate and render insecure the great fundamental and long-established principle of toleration, as

\* What a melancholy foreboding is contained in these words!—*Trans.*

† Austria.

‡ Prussia.

§ Schlegel here conveys an indirect censure on the Prussian government, for some acts of an intolerant nature towards its Catholic subjects.  
—*Trans.*

has hitherto been acknowledged. It is only in England that Anglicanism has raised her doubts as to the utility of a religious fraternity among the Christian states and nations—doubts which are connected with the still exclusively Protestant character of the English constitution, and which on many occasions may lead England to a sort of schismatical rupture with the rest of Europe. On several occasions we must contemplate with regret how that mighty England, in the eighteenth century so brilliant and so powerful by the sway she exerted over the whole European mind, no longer seems to feel herself at home in the nineteenth century, nor to know where to find her place in the new order of things.

But as respects Europe at large, the maxims and principles of liberalism are only a partial return to the revolution—they can have no other tendency but to revolution. Liberalism will never obtain a majority among the well-thinking persons of any of the European states, except by some gross error—some singular degeneracy in that party, which really does not constitute a party, and ought not to be called such—I mean, the men who in politics are attached to monarchy, and in religion to Christianity.

The mere principle of a mechanical balance of power to serve as a negative check on overgrown dominion—a system which emanated from England, and was in the eighteenth century universally received—has ceased to be applicable or to be of service to the existing state of things in Europe; for all the remedies which it can offer tend only to aggravate the evil when it has once occurred. In religion alone are to be found the remedies and the safeguards, the emancipation and consolidation, of the whole civilised world, as well as of every particular state. The most imminent danger to our age, and the possible abuse of religion itself, are the excesses of the absolute. Great is the danger when, in a vindictive spirit of reaction, a revolutionary conduct is adopted by the party of legitimacy; when passion itself is consecrated into a maxim of reason, and held up as the only valid and just mode of proceeding; and when the sacredness of religion itself is hawked about as some fashionable opinion; as if the world-redeeming power of faith and truth consisted in the mere dead letter and in the recited formula. True life can spring only from the vivifying spirit of eternal truth. In science,



the absolute is the abyss which swallows up the living truth, and leaves behind only the hollow idea and the dead formula. In the political world, the absolute in conduct and speculation is that false spirit of time, opposed to all good and to the fulness of divine truth, which in a great measure rules the world, and may entirely rule it, and lead it for ever to its final ruin. As errors would not be dangerous or deceptive, and would have little effect, unless they contained a portion or appearance of truth, this false spirit of time, which successively assumes all forms of destruction since it has abandoned the path of eternal truth, consists in this: it withdraws particular facts from their historical connexion, and holds them up as the centre and term of a system, without any limitation, and without any regard to historical circumstances. The true foundation, and the right term of things, in the history of society as in the lives of individuals, cannot be thus severed from their historical connexion and their place in the natural order of events. In any speculation or enterprise conducted by this passionate spirit of exaggeration, the living spirit must evaporate, and only the dead and deadening formula survive. What idols may successively be worshipped by the changing spirit of time, which easily bounds from one extreme to another, cannot be determined beforehand. It is even possible that for a while eternal truth itself may be profaned and perverted to such an idol of the day — I mean, the counterfeit form of truth; for the spirit of time, however it may assume the garb, can never attain the inward essence and living energy of truth. Whatever may be the alternate idol, and the reigning object of its worship, or of its passionate rhetoric, it still remains essentially the same—that is to say, the absolute, alike deadening to intellect and destructive to life. In science, the absolute is the idol of vain and empty systems, of dead and abstract reason.

The Christian faith has the living God and his revelation for its object, and is itself that revelation; hence every doctrine taken from this source is something real and positive. The defence of truth against error will then only be attended with permanent success when the divine doctrine, in whatever department it may be, is represented with intellectual energy as a living principle, and at the same time placed in its historical connexion with a due regard to every other his-

torical reality. This calm, historical judgment of things—this acute insight into subjects, whether they be real facts or intellectual phenomena—is the invariable concomitant of truth, and the indispensable condition to the full knowledge of truth. This is the more so, indeed, as religion, which forms the basis of all truth and of all knowledge, naturally traces with attentive eye the mysterious clue of divine Providence and divine permission through the long labyrinth of human errors and human follies, be they of a practical or a speculative nature. Error, on the other hand, is always unhistorical; the spirit of time almost always passionate; and both consequently untrue. The conflict against error cannot be brought to a prompter and more successful issue than by separating, in every system of moral and speculative error, and according to the standard of divine truth, the absolute, which is the basis of such systems, into its two component parts of truth and falsehood. For when we acknowledge and point out the truth to be found in those systems, there only remains error, whose inanity it requires little labour, little cost of talent or time, to expose and make evident to every eye. But in real life the struggle of parties often ceases to be purely intellectual—their physical energy is displayed in violent commotions; and in proportion as all parties become absolute, so their struggle becomes one of violent and mutual destruction—a circumstance which most fatally impedes the great work of religious regeneration—the mighty problem of our age, which, so far from being brought to a satisfactory termination, is not yet even solved. In this respect it is no doubt a critical fact, that in certain quarters of European life, nay, even in some entire countries, parties and governments should be more and more carried away by the spirit of absolutism. For this is not a question of names, and it is very evident that not those parties which are called, or call themselves, absolute, are the most so in reality; since now, as in all periods of violent party struggles, a whimsical mistake in names, a great disorder of ideas, and a Babel confusion of tongues, occur even in those languages otherwise distinguished for their clearness and precision.

Fixedness of principle, consistency in reasoning, firmness of character, and the severe dogmatic precision of faith, as these are the qualities which form the best test of man in

the intercourse of life, so they ought by no means to be confounded with absolutism either in conduct or speculation; for all these qualities are very compatible with the calm historical judgment of things, and a conscientious regard for all historical circumstances. Among the French writers of recent times who have devoted themselves to the task of the religious regeneration of the public mind, no one possesses the above-named qualities in a higher or in so remarkable a degree as Count Maistre; and yet of all the writers of this class he is the least open to the charge of promoting a passionate spirit of reaction; and in my own opinion he must be entirely acquitted of such an imputation. Some more rhetorical defenders, however, of religion in France cannot certainly be entirely absolved from the charge of favouring this absolute and exaggerated spirit of reaction; and so they unquestionably, even more than their opponents, injure the cause which they wish to defend. But many imputations of this sort, which party spirit has alleged, are entirely without foundation; as, when the opposition in the country I speak of extends to the government, and to all the different ministries since the restoration, the charge of political absolutism and of a spirit of reaction; every one must clearly see that no cause has really been given for such imputations. And that in a country where the most hostile parties and all conceivable opinions are tolerated, a small number of Jesuits should partake of the general toleration, is a circumstance that can excite blame, jealousy, and hypocritical alarm only in the breasts of men animated by the unjust and vindictive spirit of faction. To the distant and impartial observer, the greatest and most imminent danger to France appears to be a relapse to revolution by means of liberalism.\*

The dogmatic decision and definiteness of Catholic faith on the one hand, and the firmly rooted private convictions of Protestantism on the other, are very compatible with an historical judgment of historical events. Difficult as this may appear to the absolute spirit of our age, it is this very historical impartiality which must prepare the way for the complete triumph of truth and the consummate glory of Christianity. And it is in this consists the great distinction

\* This was spoken exactly two years before the French Revolution of July 1830.—*Trans.*



between true toleration and the fatal indifferentism of our age and of the age immediately preceding. True toleration is founded on the humble and consequently religious principle and firm hope, that while one leaves in quiet what has already an historical existence, God will conduct and arrange all things, and bring them to their appointed end. This is widely remote from that pretended equality of all religions, provided they inculcate but a good morality—a system which strikes at the root of all religion. Intolerance, on the other hand, is grounded in the proud, and therefore impious, opinion, that it can mould all things to what it fancies they ought to be, without any regard to the limits of human weakness; and without reflecting that what is put down by outward force not unfrequently grows up in secret in an altered though still more dangerous form. Of this truth it would not be difficult to adduce many historical proofs.

In the absolute spirit of our age, and in the absolute character of its factions, there is a deep-rooted intellectual pride, which is not so much personal or individual, as social, for it refers to the historical destiny of mankind, and of this age in particular. Actuated by this pride, a spirit exalted by moral energy, or invested with external power, fancies it can give a real existence to that which can only be the work of God; as from him alone proceed all those mighty and real regenerations of the world, among which Christianity—a revolution in the high and divine sense of the word—occupies the first place; and in these plastic moments, every thing is possible that man can wish or dare to hope, if in what he adds on his own part, he mars not much in what the bounteous monarch of the universe, from the overflowings of his ineffable love, outpours upon his earth. For the last three hundred years this human pride has been at work—a pride that wishes to originate events, instead of humbly awaiting them, and of resting contented with the place assigned to it among those events, and of making the best and most charitable use of those circumstances which Providence has decreed.

What I said before with regard to the Reformation may be equally applied to the principle and period of Illuminism. The idea itself is perfectly blameless, and it is unfair to pronounce on it an indiscriminate censure, and to treat it as an unqualified abuse. It was indeed but a very small portion of

this illuminism of the eighteenth century that was really derived from the truths of Christianity and the pure light of Revelation. The rest was the mere work of man, consequently vain and empty, or at least defective, corrupt in parts, and, on the whole, destitute of a solid foundation, and therefore devoid of all permanent strength and duration.

But when once, after the complete victory of truth, the divine Reformation shall appear, then that human Reformation, which till now hath existed, will sink to the ground, and disappear from the world. Then by the universal triumph of Christianity, and the thorough religious regeneration of the age, of the world, and of governments themselves, will dawn the era of a true Christian *Illuminism*. This period is not perhaps so remote from our own as the natural indolence of the human mind, which after every great occurrence loves to sink again into the death-sleep of ordinary life, would be disposed to believe. Yet must this exalted religious hope, this high historical expectation, be coupled with great apprehension, as to the full display of divine justice in the world. For how is such a religious regeneration possible, until every species, form, and denomination of political idolatry be eradicated, and entirely extirpated from the earth?

Never was there a period that pointed so strongly, so clearly, so generally towards the future, as our own. On this account we should endeavour clearly and accurately to distinguish between what, on the one hand, man may by slow, progressive, but unwearied exertions—by the pacific adjustment of all disputed points—and by the cultivation of his intellectual qualities, contribute towards the great work of the religious regeneration of government and science—and what, on the other hand, he should look for in silent awe from a higher Providence—from the new creative fiat of a last period of consummation, unable as he is to produce or call it forth. We are directed much more towards the future than towards the past;—but in order to comprehend in all its magnitude the problem of our age, it sufficeth not that we should seek this social regeneration in the eighteenth century—an age in no respect entitled to praise—or in the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, and his times of false national glory. The birth of Christianity must be the great point of survey to which we must recur, not to bring back or counterfeit the

forms of ages past, which are no longer applicable to our own; but clearly to examine what has remained incomplete, what has not yet been attained. For unquestionably, all that has been neglected in the earlier periods and stages of Christian civilisation must be made good in this true, consummate regeneration of society. If truth is to obtain a complete victory—if Christianity is really to triumph on the earth—then must the state become Christian, and science become Christian. But these two objects have never been generally, nor completely realised; although during the many ages mankind have been Christian, they have struggled for the attainment of both, and though this political struggle and this intellectual aspiration form the purport of modern history. The Roman empire, even after the true religion had become predominant, was too thoroughly and radically corrupt ever to form a truly Christian state. The sound, unvitiated natural energy of the Germanic nations seemed far better fitted for such a destiny, after they had received from Christianity a high religious consecration for this purpose. There was, if we may so speak, in the interior of each state, as well as in the general system of Christendom, a most magnificent foundation laid for a truly Christian structure of government. But this groundwork remained unfinished, after the internal divisions in the state, then the divisions between church and state, and lastly the divisions in the church and in religion itself, had interrupted the successful beginnings of a most glorious work.

The ecclesiastical writers of the first ages furnish a solid foundation for all the future labours of Christian science; but their science does not comprehend all the branches of human knowledge. In the middle age, undoubtedly, this foundation of a Christian science, laid down by the early fathers, was slowly prosecuted and in detail; but on the whole, many hurtful influences of the time had reduced science and speculation to a very low ebb, when suddenly in the fifteenth century all the literary treasures of ancient Greece, and all the new discoveries in geography and physics, were offered to philosophy. Scarcely had philosophy begun to examine these mighty stores of ancient and modern science, in order to give them a Christian form, and to appropriate them to the use of religion and modern society, when the



world again broke out into disputes; and this noble beginning of a Christian philosophy was interrupted, and has since remained an unfinished fragment for a later and a happier period. Such, then, is the twofold problem of a real and complete regeneration which our age is called upon to solve;—on one hand, the further extension of Christian government, and of Catholic principles of legislation, in opposition to the revolutionary spirit of the age, and to the anti-Christian principle of government hitherto so exclusively prevalent; and on the other hand, the establishment of a Christian philosophy, or Catholic science. As I before characterised the political spirit of the eighteenth century by the term Protestantism of state (taking that word in a purely philosophic sense, and not as a religious designation), a system which found its one main support in an old Catholic empire;\* and as I characterised the intellectual spirit of the same age by the term Protestantism of science, a science which made the greatest progress and exerted the widest influence in another † great Catholic country; systems in which nothing irreligious was originally intended, but which became so by their too exclusive or negative bearing: so I may here permit myself to say, in like manner, that the destiny of this age, the peculiar want of the nineteenth century, is the establishment of those Catholic principles of government, and the general construction of a Catholic system of science. This expression is used in a mere scientific sense, and refers to all that is positively and completely religious in thought and feeling. In the certain conviction that this cannot be misunderstood in an exclusive or polemical sense, I will expressly add, that this foundation of Catholic legislation for the future political existence of Europe may be laid by one, or more than one, non-catholic power; and that I even cherish the hope, that it is our own Germany, one half whereof is Protestant, which more than any other country is destined to complete the fabric of Catholic science and of a true Christian philosophy in all the departments of human knowledge.

The religious hope of a true and complete regeneration of the age, by a Christian system of government and a Christian system of science, forms the conclusion to this Philosophy of History. The bond of a religious union between all the

\* Austria.

† France.

European states will be more closely knit, and be more comprehensive, in proportion as each nation advances in the work of its own religious regeneration, and carefully avoids all relapse to the old revolutionary spirit—all worship of the false idols of mistaken freedom or illusive glory, and rejects every other new form or species of political idolatry. For it is the very nature of political idolatry to lead to the mutual destruction of parties, and consequently it can never possess the elements of stability.

Philosophy, as it is the vivifying centre of all other sciences, must be the principal concern and the highest object of the labours of Christian science. Yet history, which is so closely and so variously connected with religion, must by no means be forgotten, nor must historical research be separated from philosophic speculation. On the contrary, it is the religious spirit and views already pervading the combined efforts of historical learning and philosophic speculation, that chiefly distinguish this new era of a better intellectual culture, or as I should rather express myself, this first stage of a return to the great religious restoration. And I may venture to assert that this spirit, at least in the present century, has become ever more and more the prevailing characteristic of German science, and on this science, in its relation to the moral wants and spiritual calling of the nineteenth century, I have now a few observations to make. Like an image reflected in a mirror, or like those symptoms which precede and announce a crisis in human events, the centre-point of all government, or the religious basis of legislation, is sure to be reflected in the whole mental culture, or in the most remarkable intellectual productions of a nation. In England, the equilibrium of a constitution that combines in itself so many conflicting elements is reflected in its philosophy. The revolutionary spirit was prevalent in the French literature of the eighteenth century long before it broke out in real life; and the struggle is still very animated between the intellectual defenders and champions of the monarchical and religious Restoration, and of the newly awakened liberal opposition. In like manner, as the German people were, and still are, half Catholic and half Protestant, it is religious peace which in all literature, and particularly in philosophy, forms the basis of their modern intellectual culture. The mere æsthetic part of

German letters, as regards art and poetry,—that artist-like enthusiasm peculiar to our nation—the struggles which convulsed the infancy of our literature—the successive imitation and rejection of the French and English models—the very general diffusion of classical learning—the newly enkindled love for our native speech, and for the early history of our country, and its elder monuments of art—all these are subjects of minor interest in the European point of view we here take, and form but the prelude and introduction to that higher German science and philosophy which is now more immediately the subject of our inquiries. Historical research should never be separated from any philosophy, still less from the German; as historical erudition is the most effectual counterpoise to that absolute spirit, so prevalent in German science and German speculation.

Art and poetry constitute that department of intellect wherein every nation should mostly follow the impulse of its own spirit, its own feelings, and its own turn of fancy; and we must regard it as an exception when the poetry of any particular nation (such, for instance, as that of the English at the present day) is felt and received by other nations as an European poetry. On the other hand, history is a sort of intellectual common open to all European nations. The English, who in this department were ever so active and distinguished, have, in very recent times, produced works on their own national history which really merit the name of classical monuments of the new religious restoration. Science in general, and philosophy in particular, should never be exclusive or national—should never be called English or German—but should be general and European. And if this is not so entirely the case as in the nature of things it ought to be, we must ascribe it to the defects of particular forms. Of this truth the example of the French language may convince us; for no one will deny the metaphysical profundity of Count Maistre, or the dialectic perspicacity of the Viscount De Bonald. Although those absolute principles which appear to characterise the European nations at this time have much less influence on real life and on the social relations in Germany than in any other country; yet the false spirit of the absolute seems to be quite native to German science and philosophy, and for a long period has been the principal



cause which has cramped the religious spirit and feelings so natural to the German character, or at least has given them a false direction.

With regard to religious opinions, Protestantism in Germany has not been split into a multitude of new, various, and jarring sects, as in other countries, such as England, Holland, and North America, where it was exclusively or for the most part predominant; for even the *Hernhutters* were not properly a sect. It is only very recently the *Pietists* have formed themselves into a party opposed to the *Rationalists*—but their doctrines are not sufficiently precise and determinate to constitute them a sect, according to the proper signification of that word. *Pietism* consists rather in a deep, though vague, sentiment of religion, and in a fusion of various and opposite religious views and doctrines. Undoubtedly this moral fusion of opinions, as well as that outward complication of the interests and doctrines of Catholicism and Protestantism, and of so many private views in matters of religion, produced many wild and fanciful abortions peculiar to the age; many pure idiosyncrasies among the Protestants, whether they made half advances towards the Catholic church, or pursued the opposite path of absolute individualism; or among the Catholics still more monstrous amalgamations—Protestant or semi-Protestant innovations in doctrine aimed at by individuals—innovations which originated in the principles of *Illuminism*, and were countenanced by the well-known policy of certain sovereigns. Much as we may feel disposed, or are even bound, to oppose with all our might such moral abortions, when the question regards their practical operation—yet I do not think we ought to pronounce an absolutely unfavourable judgment on their general intellectual tendency. The real primary evil of the eighteenth century—an utter indifference for all religious doctrines and concerns,—the dangerous spirit of complete indifferentism, from whose contagion many purely Catholic countries did not escape, took less strong hold in Germany, and obtained less general diffusion, than in any other country. A deep, indelible religious feeling still continued to characterise the German nation, and to give a tone to its philosophical speculations. We should not pay too much attention to some transient and partial paradoxes:—I well recollect the words of an old, very experienced, pious, and enlightened

ecclesiastic, who well understood the German character, and who used to say, "If we don't give a religion to the Germans, they will make one out for themselves."

Even in the greatest errors of their philosophy, a certain religious bearing and tendency can easily be pointed out. However, in a country like Germany, where religious opinions and interests are so various and so intermixed, a long time must elapse before a profound philosophy, which would satisfy these yearnings of religious desire, can attain its full moral development, or assume a clear outward tangible form. If I before said of the English, in reference to the struggle going on between the conflicting elements of their government—a struggle which in one form or other every great European nation has to settle in its own interior, and to bring to a successful issue—that it would appear by many expressions in their parliamentary proceedings, from those in particular at the head of affairs, and who are best acquainted with them, that a secret self-apprehension besets the minds of English politicians; so I may now say of our German nation, among whom the conflict lies principally, or more immediately, in the sphere of religion and philosophy, that more than all other nations the Germans are destitute of self-knowledge and of mutual concord; and the cause of this must be sought for in the unfulfilment of their religious and philosophical destiny, and in the yet unallayed discord between opposite elements of faith and various systems of science.

In the first period of German literature, the Protestants had quite the preponderance; but since then the balance, at least in science, has been completely restored. I speak here of internal religious principles, and not of outward confessions of faith, which cannot be made the criterion for a philosophic classification. For otherwise, by descending into details, I might cite, among the few quite irreligious organs of German philosophy, some writers (happily rare exceptions) who belonged to Catholic Germany; and on the other hand, among those foremost and most distinguished in reviving the pure Platonic philosophy, and whose profound religious conceptions have given quite a Christian form to natural philosophy itself, I might adduce the names of men who were members of the Protestant church. Philosophy itself has not to determine nor to illustrate religious dogmas, nor does it stand

in immediate connexion with them. The main point to which I wish to direct attention, and which is necessary to render philosophy Christian, is, that an internal harmony or unison should be preserved between faith and science; next, that the principle of divine revelation should be regarded as the basis, not only of theology, but of every other science; and lastly, that even nature herself should be studied and investigated by this high religious light, and thus made to receive from science a new and transparent lustre. The modern German philosophy even in its infancy, when it was yet pretty closely allied to the English school, and mostly started with the same problems (though it gave to these a deeper and a wider solution), aimed at this harmony between faith and science. It understood both, indeed, in the very limited sense of a mere faith of reason and science of reason, influenced as it was by the Rationalism then so generally diffused, not only in Protestant but even in Catholic countries, and notably in Catholic Germany. But at the same time other profound thinkers sought another and higher foundation for philosophy in the idea of revelation—a revelation which some understood in a mere general and speculative, though not irreligious, sense; and others in the Christian sense of positive faith and pious feeling. The capital vice of German philosophy is the absolute, the philosophic reflection of the general vice of the spirit of the age, which exerts an absolute influence on life itself—whether this vice of German philosophy assume the form of the absolute *ego*,\* or that of the pantheistic naturalism,† or that of absolute reason.‡ It is this which originally gave to the natural philosophy of the Germans a false pantheistic direction, for the real materialism which has found so many advocates among the French naturalists has, from the very ideal tendency of the German mind, experienced little favour in Germany. Yet this foreign influence was not of long continuance; German physics became deeply imbued with a religious spirit, and the German

\* Schlegel alludes to the philosophy of Fichte, which was an *ideal subjective Pantheism*.

† The author here alludes to the philosophy of Schelling, which was more a material and objective Pantheism, not unlike the system of Spinoza.

‡ This last expression contains, I believe, an allusion to the philosophy of Hegel.—*Trans.*



natural philosophy is now in the hands of its first representatives decidedly Christian. And this progress in the great work of the religious regeneration of science I must consider as the noblest triumph of genius, for it is precisely in the department of physics the problem was the most difficult; and all that rich and boundless treasure of new discoveries in nature, which are ever better understood when viewed in connexion with the high truths of religion, must be looked upon as the property of Christian science. The various systems of philosophic Rationalism, mutually subversive as they are of each other, will fall to the ground, and the vulgar Rationalism, which is but an emanation of the higher, and which still prevails in some particular schools, and in many of the lower walks of German literature, will finally disappear, in proportion as German philosophy becomes imbued with the spirit of religion, and German science becomes thoroughly Christian, or Catholic. In the firm hope that this will certainly happen, I have given publicity to these first essays of a philosophy I had long in secret prepared, and of which the first part, "The Philosophy of Life," treats of consciousness, or of the inward man; the second, this "Philosophy of History," which I now have here brought to a close, considers the outward man, or the progress of states and nations through all ages of the world.

That in this progress of mankind, a divine Hand and conducting Providence are clearly discernible; that earthly and visible power has not alone co-operated in this progress, and in the opposition which has impeded it, but that the struggle has been in part carried on under divine, and against invisible might,—is a truth, I trust, which, if not proved to mathematical evidence (an evidence here neither appropriate nor applicable), has still been substantiated on firm and solid grounds. We may conclude our work by a retrospective view of society, considered in reference to that invisible world and higher region, from which the operations of this visible world proceed, in which its great destinies have their root, and which is the ultimate and highest term of all its movements.

Christianity is the emancipation of the human race from the bondage of that inimical spirit who denies God, and, as far as in him lies, leads all created intelligences astray.

Hence the Scripture styles him, "the prince of this world;" and so he was in fact, but in ancient history only, when among all the nations of the earth, and amid the pomp of martial glory, and the splendour of Pagan life, he had established the throne of his domination. Since this divine era in the history of man, since the commencement of his emancipation in modern times, this spirit can no longer be called the prince of this world, but the *spirit of time*, the spirit opposed to divine influence, and to the Christian religion, apparent in those who consider and estimate time and all things temporal, not by the law and feeling of eternity, but for temporal interests, or from temporal motives, change, or undervalue, and forget the thoughts and faith of eternity.

In the first ages of the Christian church, this spirit of time appeared as a beguiling sectarian spirit. This spirit obtained its highest triumph in the new and false faith of a fanatic Unitarianism, utterly opposed to the religion of love, and which severed from Christianity so large a portion of the Eastern church, and whole regions of Asia. In the middle ages this spirit displayed itself, not so much in hostile sects, as in scholastic disputes, in divisions between church and state, and in the internal disorders of both. At the commencement of the new era of the world, the spirit of time claimed as an urgent want of mankind, full freedom of faith; a claim of which the immediate consequence was only a bloody warfare, and a fatal struggle of life and death, protracted beyond a century. When this struggle was terminated, or rather appeased, it was succeeded by an utter indifference for all religions, provided only their morality were good; and the spirit of time proclaimed religious *indifferentism* as the order of the day. This apparent calm was followed by the revolutionary tempest; and now that this has passed away, the spirit of time has in our days become absolute—that is to say, it has perverted reason to party—passion, or exalted passion to the place of reason: and this is the existing form and last metamorphosis of the old evil spirit of time.

Turning now to that Divine aid which has supported mankind in their ever-enduring struggle against their own infirmities, against all the obstacles of nature and natural circumstances, and against the opposition of the evil spirit; I have endeavoured to shew, that in the first thousand years of

Primitive History, Divine Revelation, although preserved in its native purity but in the one original source, still flowed in copious streams through the religious traditions of the other great nations of that pristine epoch; and that troubled as the current might be by the admixture of many errors, yet was it easy to trace it, in the midst of this slime and pollution, to its pure and sacred source. And with such a belief must commence every religious view of universal history. And it is only with this religious belief, and perception of the traces of divine revelation, we can rightly comprehend and judge this primitive epoch of history. We shall prize with deeper, more earnest, and more solid affection the great and divine era of man's redemption and emancipation (occurring as it does in the middle-point of human history) the more accurately we discriminate between what is essentially divine and unchangeably eternal in this revelation of love, and the elements of destruction which man has opposed thereto or intermingled therewith. And it is only in the spirit of love the history of Christian times can be rightly understood and accurately judged. In later ages, when the spirit of discord has triumphed over love, historical hope is our only remaining clue in the labyrinth of history. It is only with sentiments of grateful admiration, of amazement, and awe, we trace in the special dispensations of providence, for the advancement of Christianity and the progress of modern society, the wonderful concurrence of events towards the single object of divine love, or the unexpected exercise of divine justice long delayed; such as I have in the proper places endeavoured to point out. With this faith in Primitive Revelation, and in the glorious consummation of Christian love, I cannot better conclude this "Philosophy of History" than with the religious hope I have more than once expressed, and which is more particularly applicable to these times—the dawn of an approaching era,—that by the thorough religious regeneration of the state, and of science, the cause of God and Christianity may obtain a complete triumph on the earth.





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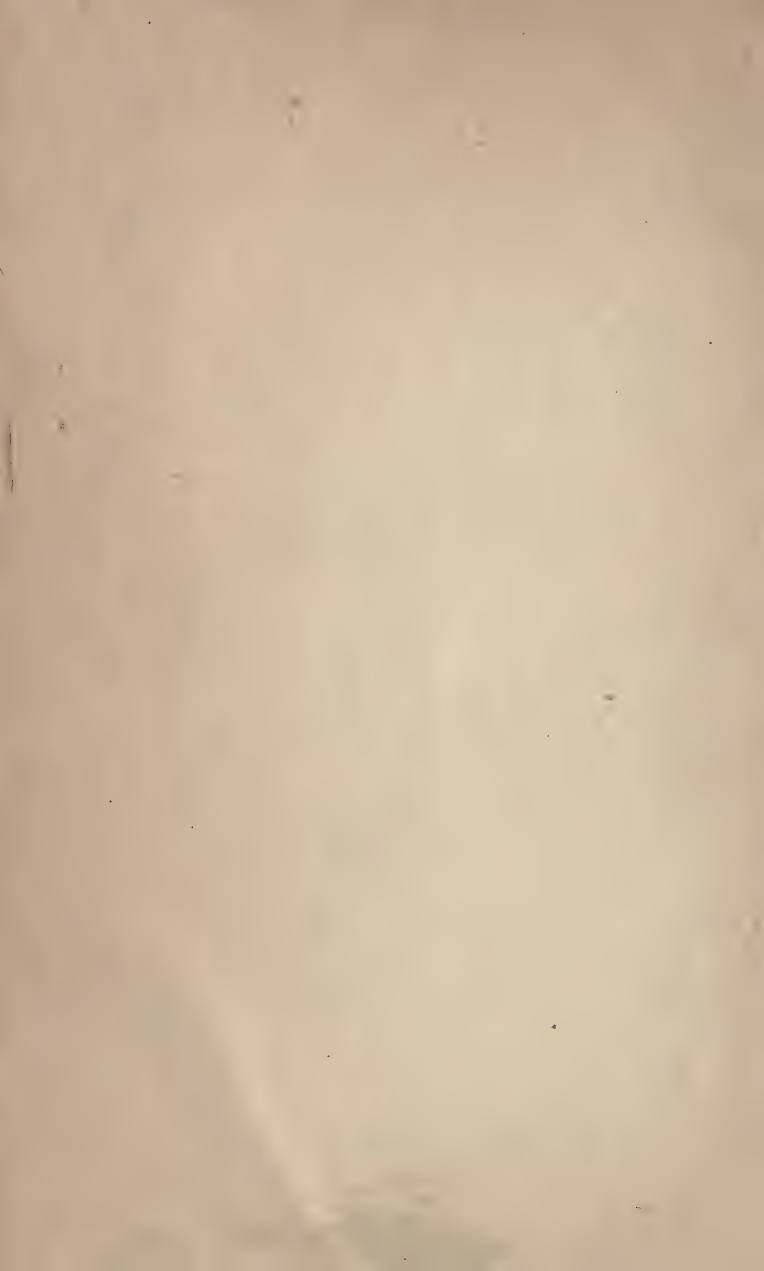
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